CORPSE PRINCE

YOSHIICHI AKAHITO

CORPSE PRINCESS

6

BOND (NOUN)

In the Kougon Sect, a concept similar to fate or karma. A necessary element if one is to achieve absolute understanding of the world, or "enlightenment." A Buddhist monk's personal protective deity is also determined by this "bond."

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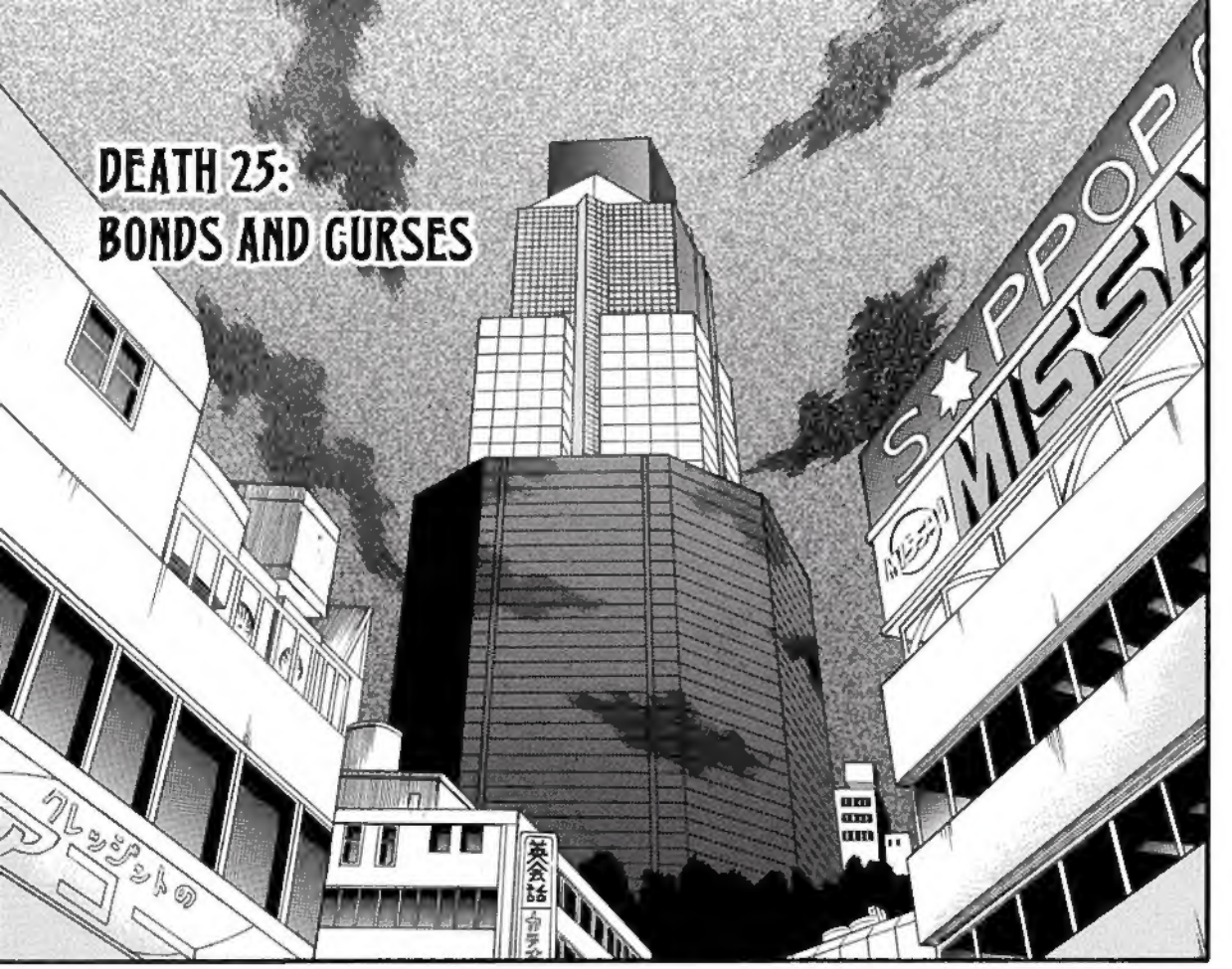
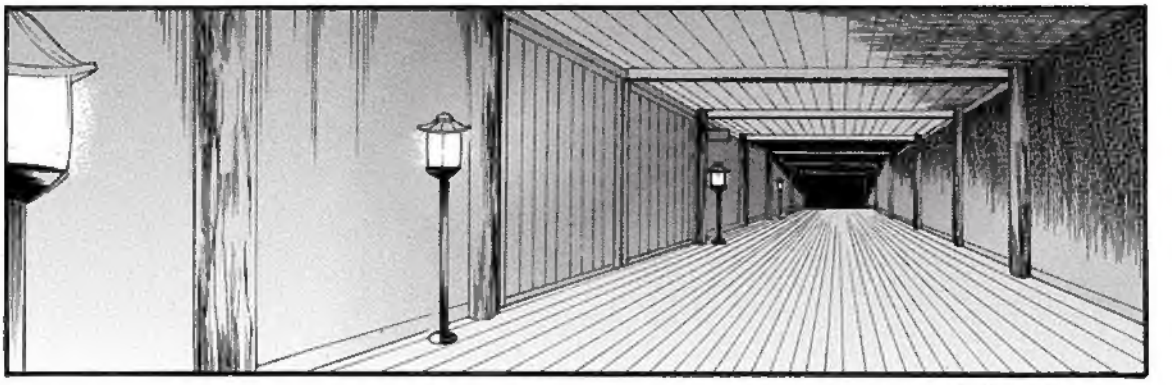
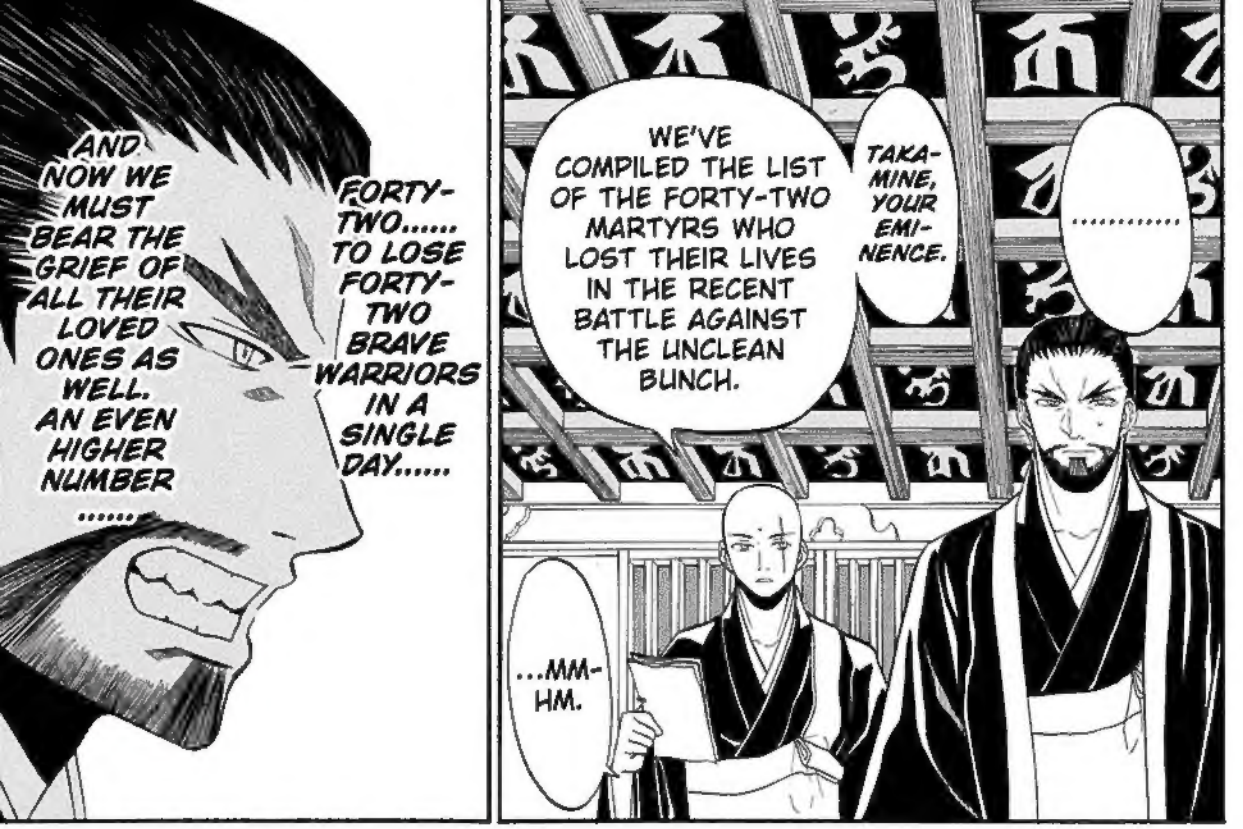
DEATH 25:
BONDS AND CURSES





DEATH 25: BONDS AND CURSES

BITTER .....
A BITTER LOSS..... INDEED.


AND NOW WE MUST BEAR THE GRIEF OF ALL THEIR LOVED ONES AS WELL. AN EVEN HIGHER NUMBER .....
FORTY-TWO..... TO LOSE FORTY-TWO BRAVE WARRIORS IN A SINGLE DAY.....
WE'VE COMPILED THE LIST OF THE FORTY-TWO MARTYRS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE RECENT BATTLE AGAINST THE UNCLEAN BUNCH.
TAKA-MINE, YOUR EMI-NENCE.
.....
...MM-HM.

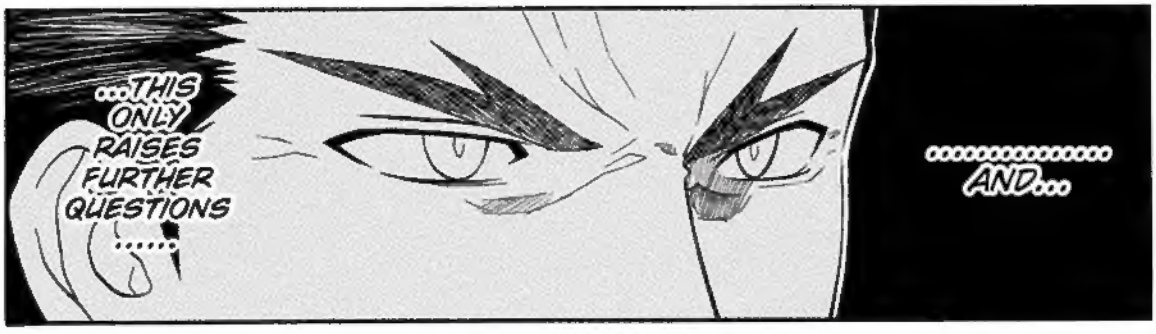
.....I SEE.
THE SEARCH FOR HER IN THE FIELD IS ONGOING .....
..... HOW-EVER ...
THE BODY OF ARAGAMI GON-SOUJOU WAS NEVER DISCOVERED.

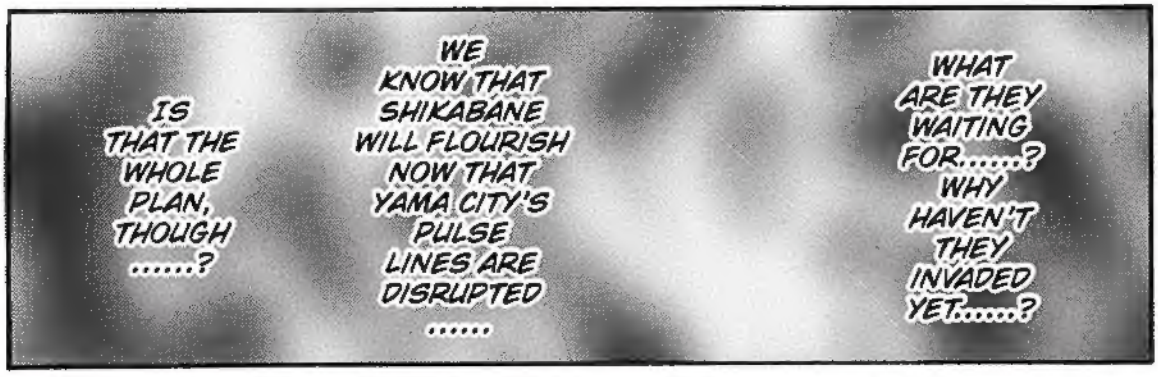
ABOUT A SUPPOSED "FOUNDER" SHIKABANE .....
AND THEN..... THERE'S THE INTEL THAT SAKI SENT US.

IT'S HARD TO REMAIN SO OPTIMISTIC IN THIS SITUATION .....
IT'S BEEN EIGHTEEN HOURS SINCE SHE VANISHED..... BUT, TO ASSUME THAT A LACK OF A BODY IS PROOF THAT SHE SURVIVED .....

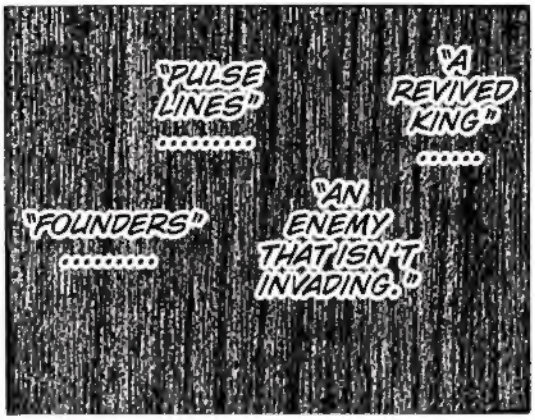
NO..... EVEN WITH A CORPSE PRINCESS, GOING UP AGAINST A FOUNDER IS.....
AT THIS POINT, MONKS WITHOUT A CORPSE PRINCESS WOULD ONLY GET IN THE WAY.....

THE SHEER EXTENT OF THE ENEMY'S PRESENT FIGHTING STRENGTH .....
...
IT'S OVER-WHELMING .....!!


...THIS ONLY RAISES FURTHER QUESTIONS .....
..... AND...


IS THAT THE WHOLE PLAN, THOUGH .....?
WE KNOW THAT SHIKABANE WILL FLOURISH NOW THAT YAMA CITY'S PULSE LINES ARE DISRUPTED .....
WHAT ARE THEY WAITING FOR.....? WHY HAVEN'T THEY INVADED YET.....?

COULD IT BE ...!?
.....

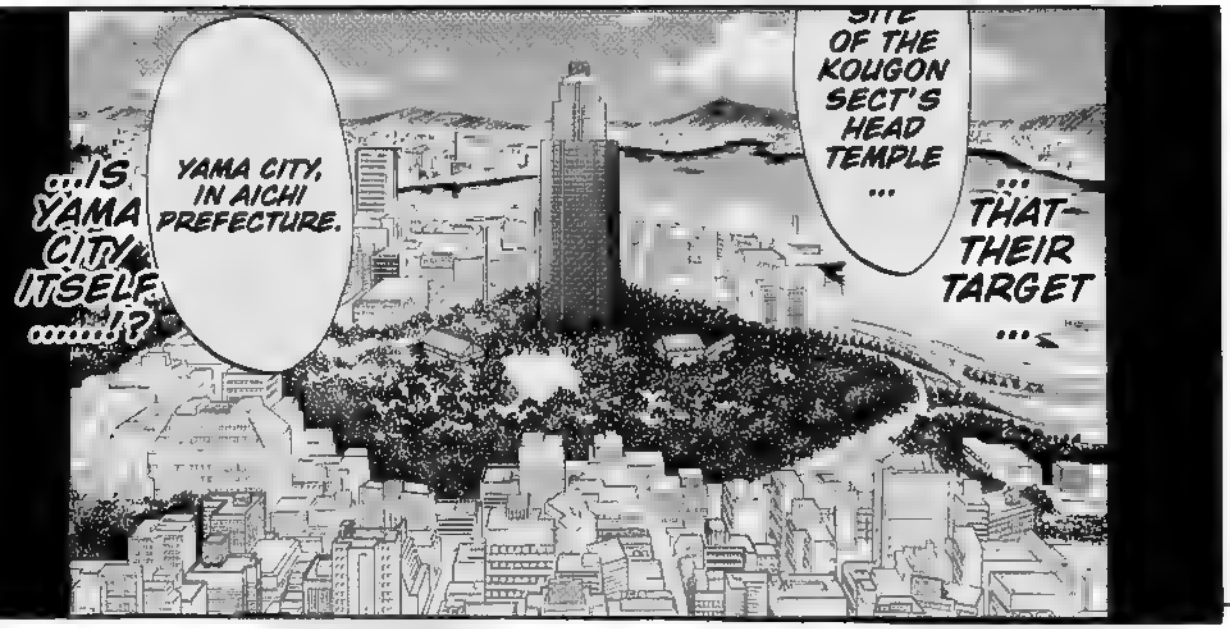

"PULSE LINES" .....
"A REVIVED KING" .....
"FOUNDERS" .....
"AN ENEMY THAT ISN'T INVADING."

BURST
!?
JUST CAUGHT MY HAND ON THE COFFIN .....
.....NOTHING.
... WHAT IS IT?
! OUCH.
GREAK
MY..... MY FINGERS !!
SPLURT
!! GYAHH.
!! WAHH !!
CRAWL
NEED .....
YOU .....
WARM..... ME UP .....
GRUNCH
C— COLD .....
GRUNCH

SLASH
THUNK
WARMTH ...
UWAHH !!
SPLAT
TWITCH
TWITCH
PARDON ME, TAKAMINE-SAMA.
SHINK
KA-MIKA !!
!!

EVEN A GRUDGE OVER BEING KILLED BY A SHIKABANE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ENOUGH .....
IN-CREDI-BLE.
TO THINK THAT A SHIKABANE WOULD COME TO LIFE DIRECTLY BELOW KOUGON SECT HQ.....
YES.
NOT AT ALL..... WELL DONE.....
BUT .....

.....DOES... THIS REALLY MEAN...
THE PULSE LINES HAVE GROWN STAGNANT FASTER THAN WE IMAGINED .....
INDEED.


...IS YAMA CITY ITSELF.....!?
YAMA CITY, IN AICHI PREFECTURE.
OF THE KOUGON SECT'S HEAD TEMPLE ...
...THAT- THEIR TARGET ...

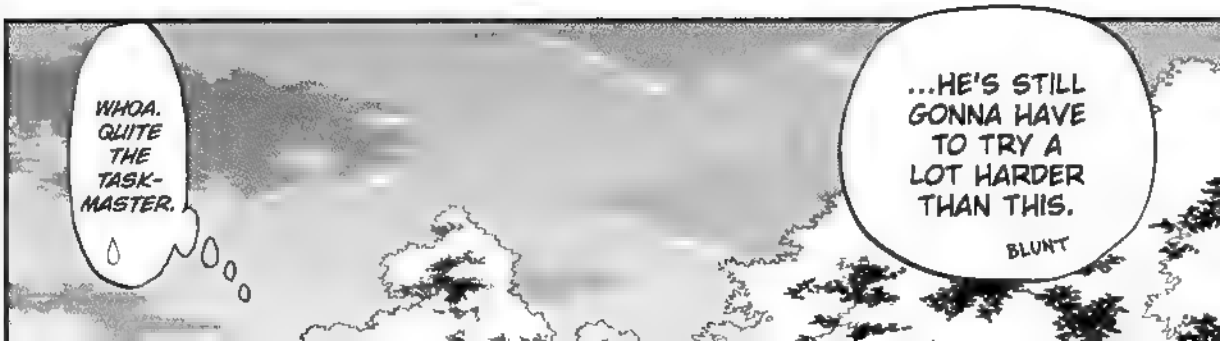
HUMMMMMMM
HUM
.....
LET'S HEAD BACK.
OKAY.
I'M DONE, SAWAMIYA-SAN.
LIFT

OH.
HEY.
YOU GIRLS DONE FOR THE DAY TOO?
YEAH.
HOW'D IT GO FOR YOU TWO?
HMM...
DRAG
AH.
NAH.
HE MANAGED TO GET A GLIMPSE OF THE BOND, AT LEAST.
FUR
FLUFFY
..... NO GOOD, THEN?
BUT HE RAN OUT OF STEAM WHEN THE BUNNY KICKED HIM IN THE FACE.
.....OH, REALLY.

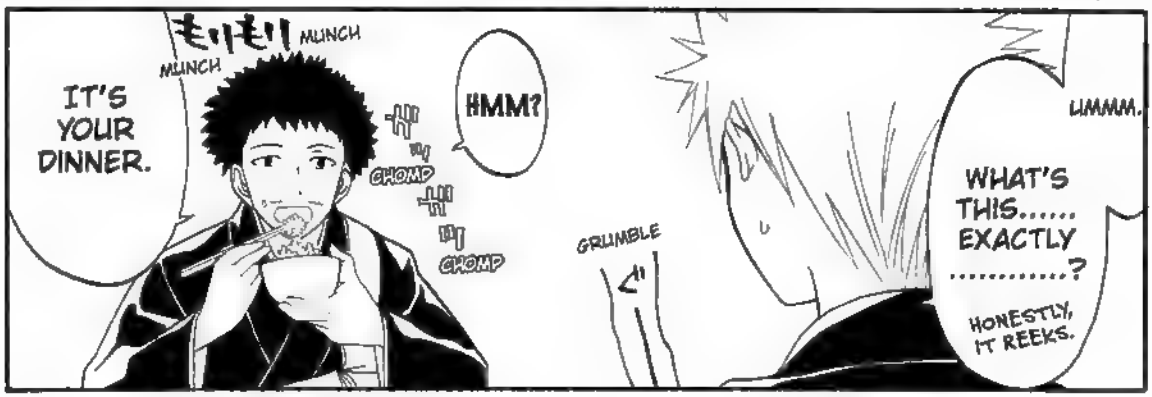
.....
WHY'S THAT?
ONCE HE'S TRAINED, HE MIGHT JUST MAKE A GOOD CONTRACT HOLDER.
GRIN
AND IN THE END, HE MANAGED TO TRAIPSE AROUND THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN OVER THE COURSE OF THE DAY.
HE'S TOUGH, AT LEAST.
THIS KID'S SOME-THING ELSE, THOUGH.
UHH... RABBIT...
PWOO...

IT'S PROOF THAT HE WANTS TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT BY YOUR SIDE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, YEAH?
I MEAN..... JUST THE FACT THAT OURI-KUN'S GIVING IT HIS ALL WITH THIS TRAINING ...

..... BUT...
THAT RIGHT ?
UHHH...
.....

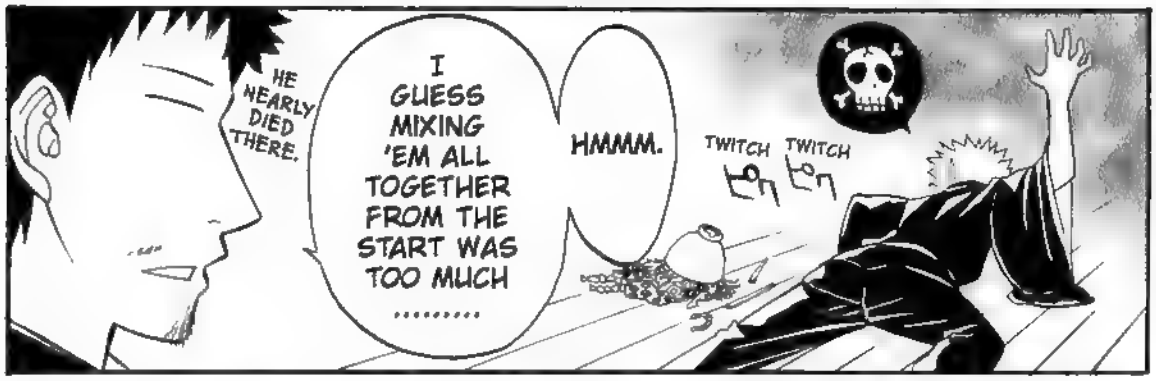

WHOA. QUITE THE TASK-MASTER.
...HE'S STILL GONNA HAVE TO TRY A LOT HARDER THAN THIS.
BLUNT

GROSS
めとり
BAG: POWDERED TOPPING / EGG


IT'S YOUR DINNER.
MUNCH MUNCH
CHOMP CHOMP
HMM?
GRUMBLE
UMMM.
WHAT'S THIS..... EXACTLY .....?
HONESTLY, IT REEKS.

GUH !!
YOU'RE EATING FISH!
IF YOU WANNA MAKE PROGRESS HERE, THEN IT'S DOWN THE HATCH.
ALL THOSE CHINESE ROOTS AND HERBS'LL DO A NUMBER ON YOUR CONSTITUTION AND HELP YOU GRASP BONDS THAT MUCH BETTER.
CHEW CHEW
CRUNCH CRUNCH

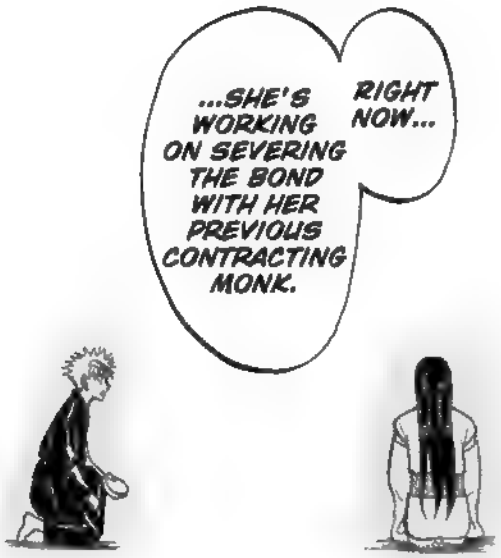
SO EVEN YOUR MEALS'VE GOT TO BE PART OF TRAINING. CAN'T WASTE ANY OPPORTUNITY.
IMMERSIVE TRAINING OR NOT, YOU'VE ONLY GOT ONE MONTH HERE.
MUNCH MUNCH
.....
WHY?
CHOMP CHOMP
...



BOX: CHOCOLUNA

HEY..... WHAT KIND OF TRAINING WERE YOU DOING, HOSHIMURA-SAN?
YEAH.
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
THAT SO?
..... NAH. I'M FINE. I CAN DO IT.
SHE LOOKED SERI-OUS.
TREMBLE
?
CRUNCH
...
..... SAME AS YOU. I'M WORKING ON STRENGTH-ENING MY BOND ABILITIES.
"BOND-SEVERING" TO BE PRECISE.
!?
YES.
UNLIKE HUMANS, CORPSE PRINCESSES CAN'T CREATE AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF BONDS.
SO OUR BONDS HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY SELECTED, AND WE DISCARD THE ONES WE DON'T NEED ANYMORE.
BOND-SEVERING ?

SHUDDER
.....
EH?


...SHE'S WORKING ON SEVERING THE BOND WITH HER PREVIOUS CONTRACTING MONK.
RIGHT NOW...

THAT'S WHY.....WE... HAVE TO ELIMINATE ALL BONDS THAT ARE STRONGER THAN THE ONE WITH OUR CONTRACT HOLDER.....
FOR WE CORPSE PRINCESSES..... IF OUR STRONGEST BOND ISN'T WITH OUR CURRENT CONTRACTING MONK, WE CAN'T REACH OUR FULL POTENTIAL IN BATTLE.....

BUT IT WILL BECOME HARDER TO REMEMBER THEM.
AND YOU'LL EVENTUALLY STOP GOING TO PLACES YOU ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.....
SEVERING THAT BOND..... DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL FORGET ABOUT THAT PERSON.

S-SO..... THAT MEANS HOSHIMURA-SAN HAS TO CUT HER BOND WITH BIG BRO.....?
..... THAT'S...

AND DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.
!
..... JUST STOP.
BUT.....
.....!
FADE
THEY'RE ALL THINGS I'VE GOT TO DO.
THIS..... AND THE BOND-SEVERING.
EVERYTHING I'M DOING IS FOR ME.
I HAVE TO KEEP HUNTING DOWN SHIKABANE IF I WANT TO REACH HEAVEN.
...IT'S MY CHOICE.
BECAUSE ...

REVERSAL GROTTO.
IN THERE'S THE LAST BOND-SEVERING SPRING.
CLICK

GOT IT.
YOU GO IN, FIND THE SOURCE OF THE SPRING, PUT YOUR HAND ON THE STONE-CARVED SEAL, AND MEDITATE. THAT'S IT.
PRETTY SIMPLE, HUH?
IT WORKS THE SAME WAY AS THE OTHERS.

THIS TIME, YOU'LL TAKE THIS PILL BEFORE HEADING IN.
FLIK
HOW-EVER!

?
.....
BUT BE CAREFUL.
IT'S A FOCUS DRUG THAT'LL INTENSIFY THE IMAGE OF YOUR BOND-SEVERING TARGET.
IT'S A REALLY STRONG DRUG MEANT ONLY FOR CORPSE PRINCESSES, SO WE ONLY USE IT AT THE END.
OKAY.
SOME WHO ENTER THE GROTTO GET TIED DOWN BY POINTLESS BONDS AND SINK INTO REGRET.
SOME AREN'T EVEN ABLE TO FIGHT AS CORPSE PRINCESSES ANYMORE.

...YOU'LL RECEIVE FORMAL PERMISSION TO STRIVE FOR HEAVEN ONCE AGAIN.
FWIP
BUT IF YOU OVERCOME IT AND SUCCESSFULLY CUT THOSE TIES WITH THAT PREDECESSOR ...
BECAUSE FOR US, BOND-SEVERING AMOUNTS TO A TERRIBLE BURDEN.

PLISH
PLISH

PLISH
CATCH
.....
OKAY.

I'M... CHOOSING THIS PATH FOR MYSELF.
..... I'M OKAY.
PLUNK
CAN'T FIGHT AS A CORPSE PRINCESS ANYMORE .....
TIED DOWN BY UNNECESSARY BONDS.....
PLUNK

YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
SHUDDER

.....AN ILLUSION ?
MAYBE AN EFFECT OF THE DRUG .....?
BADUM
TURN
!?
.....

.....
THIS IS IT.
.....
NO GOING BACK NOW.....
FWIP
.....
TWITCH
SHRILL
SHRILL
FOOM

IS THIS ...
... REALLY OKAY?
TURN
!!
.....!! MY HAND.....
IT WON'T MOVE...?
!!
STAY BACK !!
PLUNK
WHO .....
... ARE YOU !?
GRAB

LOOM
MY DESIRE .....
...TO MAINTAIN THE BOND WITH ONE I HOLD DEAR.
PRESS
I'M ...
SLIDE
...MY LINGERING REGRETS.
IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN..... AN ILLUSION BORN OF MY HESITATION .....!
.....! A HALLUCINATION .....!!
I DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT, RIGHT?
MY BOND WITH KEISEI ...
YES.
BUT I'M WHAT I FEEL, DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART.
..... THE TRUTH IS...

.....
..... I...
BADUM
MY REGRETS ...
...ARE OVER ME AND MY FAMILY BEING KILLED BY THE SEVEN STARS.....
THAT'S WHY I FORMED A BOND WITH KEISEI AND STARTED AIMING FOR HEAVEN .....
ANY-WAY .....
...IT'S NOT LIKE SEVERING THIS BOND'LL MAKE ME LOSE MY MEMORIES OF KEISEI .....
WRONG.
THAT BOND ...
...IS YOUR ONLY TIE TO HIM.

AND BY LOSING THAT...
...I LOSE ANY TRACE OF KEISEI INSIDE ME.
.....
NO!
.....NO.

I ENDURE AND ENDURE .....
I SUFFOCATE MY OWN HEART, ALL FOR GREATER POWER?
LOOM
WOULD I ABANDON KEISEI IN ORDER TO GET STRONGER ?

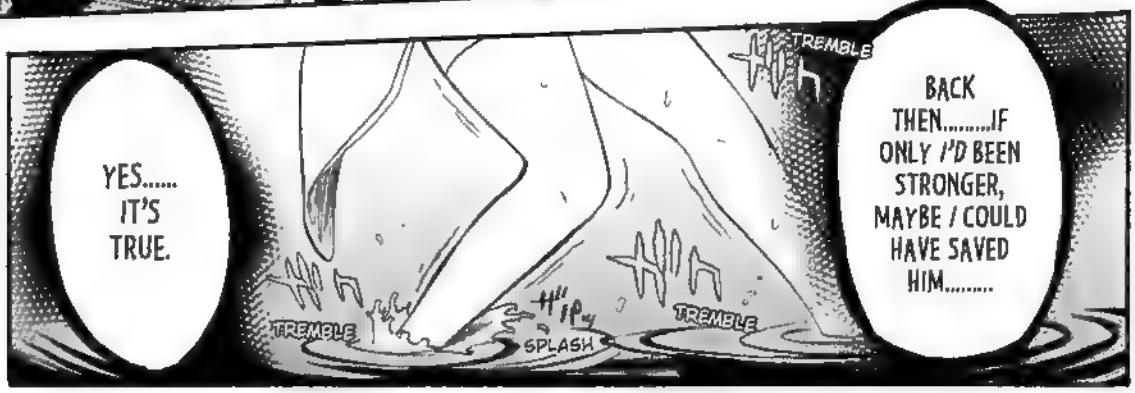
I THOUGHT THE REASON I WANTED TO GET STRONGER WAS FOR KEISEI'S SAKE..... SO...
I CAN'T GIVE IT UP.
THAT TIE.
TAP
SLICE
.....STOP IT.
NO !!

PRESS
...UGH.
PRESS
STRONG RESENTMENT AND DESPAIR ...
...GIVE ME POWER.
.....UHH.

...THAT GAVE BIRTH TO A NEW REGRET ALTOGETHER .....!
...WHEN KEISEI WAS MURDERED BEFORE MY EYES ...
REGRETS OVER MY "LIFE" TURNED ME INTO A CORPSE PRINCESS..... BUT...

I'M BITTER ABOUT IT, RIGHT?
I BLAME EVERYONE INVOLVED WITH IT .....
MORE THAN ANY-ONE ...
.....!
PRESS
...THAT MEANS THAT KEISEI WAS BASICALLY THE WORLD TO ME, YEAH?
SO ...

I BLAME MYSELF.


BACK THEN.....IF ONLY I'D BEEN STRONGER, MAYBE I COULD HAVE SAVED HIM.....
TREMBLE
YES..... IT'S TRUE.
TREMBLE
SPLASH
TREMBLE

SO...
...I'LL REGRET, RESENT, CURSE IT ALL. AND GET STRONGER.
SPIN

TWITCH
ピク
I JUST..... FELT A CHILL..... WAIT.
IT FEELS LIKE INTENSE REGRET .....!?
.....
WHAT THE —?
PLUNK
PLUNK
!
... MAKINA-CHAN?
!!

STEP
DON'T TELL ME..... DID THE BOND-SEVERING FAIL?
.....! HER RIGHT HAND..... NO...MORE THAN THAT, THOSE EYES.....
I SEVERED MY BOND SUCCESS-FULLY.
!
I'M FINE, SAWA-MIYA-SAN.
I HAVE TO GO KILL ...
...THE SEVEN STARS AND THE UNCLEAN BUNCH.
.....AND WHAT'S THAT?
I JUST..... REMEMBERED SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO.
I'M HEADING BACK NOW.
PUSH

WHAT'S WRONG?
.....
YOU'RE ACTING STRANGE, MAKINA-CHAN.
I CAN'T LET YOU GO.
SWISH
I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THAT YOUR REGRETS HAVE TAKEN HOLD OF YOU.
YOU JUST LEFT THE REVERSAL GROTTO AND IMMEDIATELY WANT TO EXACT REVENGE ...?
.....
..... YES.
...I'M PREPARED TO DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.
IF IT'LL MAKE ME STRONGER ...
FLIK
.....!
I'VE TURNED MY REGRETS INTO RAW POWER.
SO...
... WHAT DO YOU CARE?

FWIP
IF THAT'S HOW IT IS.....
.....I SEE.
YES.
REALLY, NOW?
WHOOSH
!!
SMASH
BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO STOP YOU HERE.
CLAK
THIS MIGHT GET A LITTLE ROUGH.
SKID
SKID
SKID

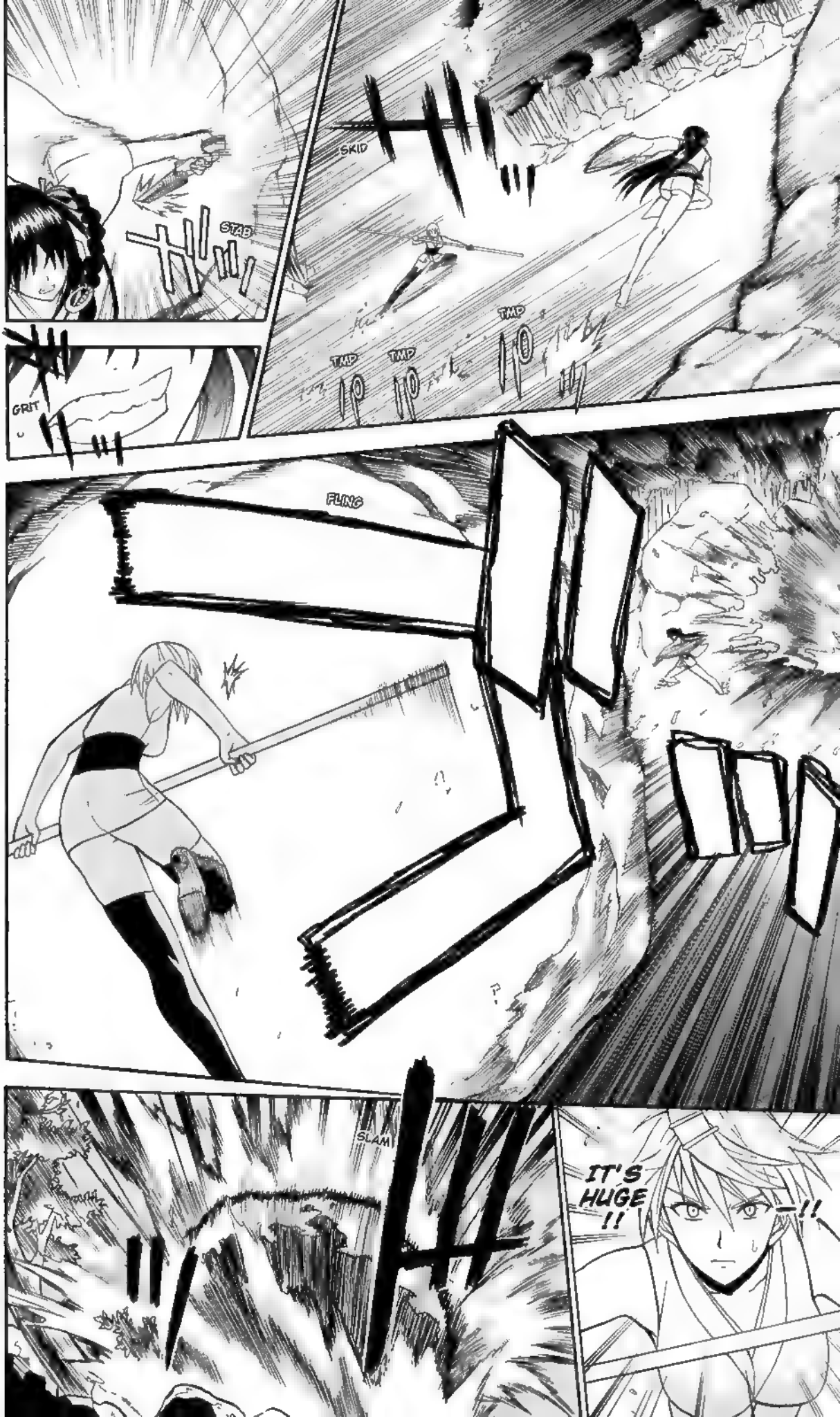
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
GRAB
A CORPSE PRINCESS'S BOND WITH HER CONTRACTING MONK TIES HER TO THIS WORLD. IT BINDS HER TO REASON.
BUT WHEN SHE LOSES THAT KEY FIGURE, THE BOND CAN TURN TO DELUSION, AND SHE CAN SLIP OVER TO THE SHIKABANE SIDE.

THAT'S WHY WE DO BOND-SEVERING.
AND ANY LITTLE GIRLS WHO DON'T GET THAT...
...NEED A GOOD SPANKING.
FSSSHHH
...

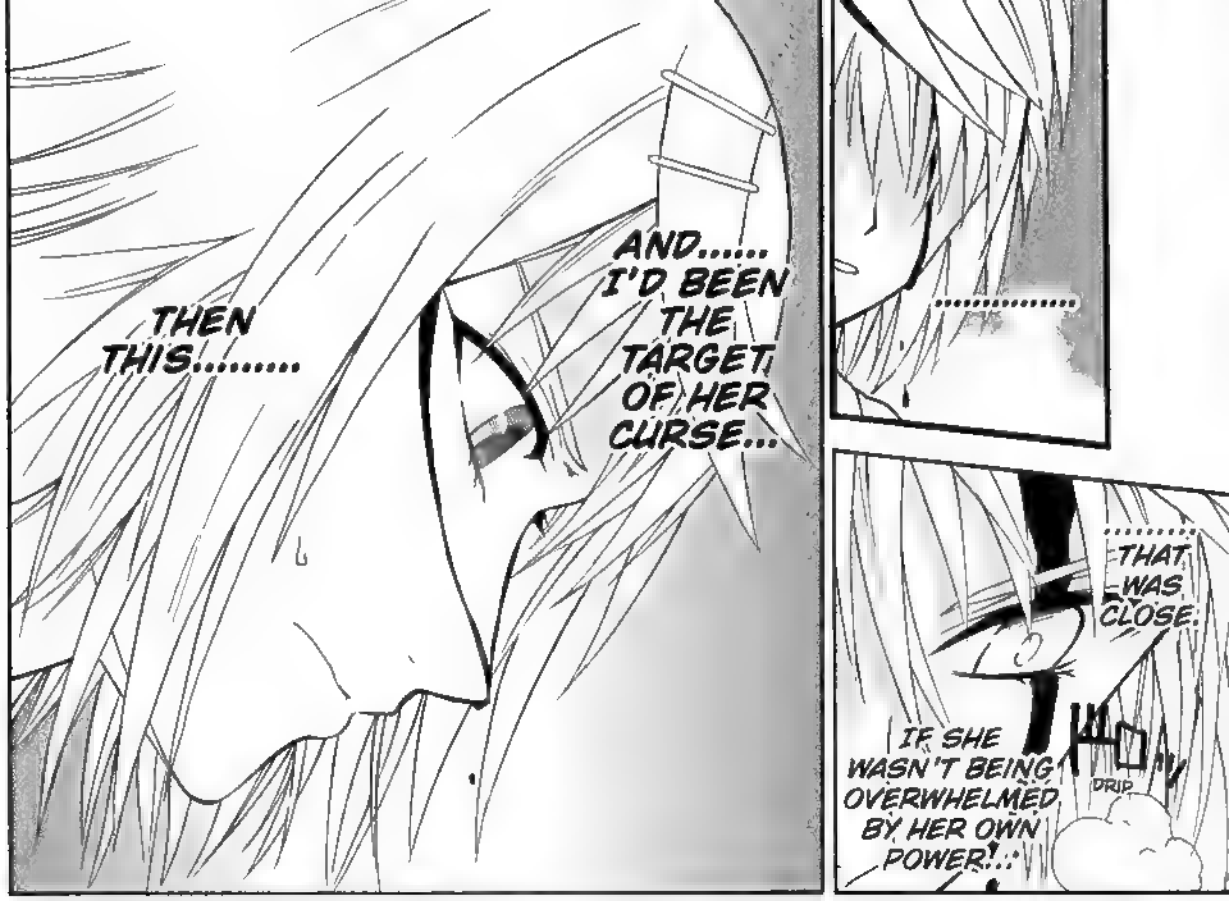
FINE. GO AHEAD.
CRACK
IF YOU CAN.....

...I FORGOT TO MENTION.
WHOOSH
..... ONE THING ...
SLICE
!

I...
...ACTUALLY LOVE THIS.
LICK
ペロ
WHOOSH
ヒュ
PINNING DOWN LITTLE CUTIES ...
...BY FORCE, THAT IS TO SAY.
STEP
WHAM
BEND
WHOOSH
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
!!


STAB
SKID
TMP
TMP
TMP
GRIT
FLING
SLAM
IT'S HUGE!!

WHOOSH
SPLASH
FWIP
!?
SLASH
...MY WIN.
THIS IS...
TCH .....
.....!


THEN THIS.....
AND..... I'D BEEN THE TARGET OF HER CURSE...
.....
.....
THAT WAS CLOSE.
IF SHE WASN'T BEING OVERWHELMED BY HER OWN POWER...
DRIP

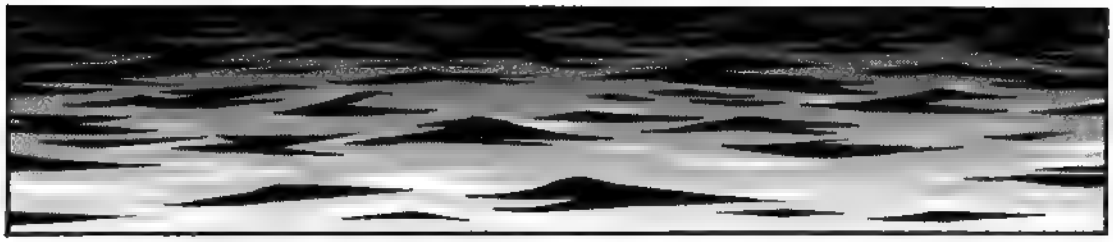
BUT CORPSE PRINCESSES'S POWERFUL REGENERATIVE ABILITIES PROTECT US FROM THAT CONSTANT RECOIL .....
IF A HUMAN WERE TO TRY THAT, THEY'D DAMAGE THEIR MUSCLES AND BONES.
A CORPSE PRINCESS'S SUPERPOWERED STATE IS NOTHING MORE THAN CONSTANTLY TAKING ORDINARY HUMAN MUSCLES TO THEIR LIMITS.

...THE POWER OF A CURSE ...
THAT'S .....

HOWEVER..... THIS GIRL CLEARLY JUST DEMONSTRATED POWER BEYOND EVEN A CORPSE PRINCESS'S LIMITS.....
OUR PHYSICAL STRENGTH, THOUGH, IS ESSENTIALLY SET WHEN WE DIE. IT CAN'T PROGRESS BEYOND THAT.

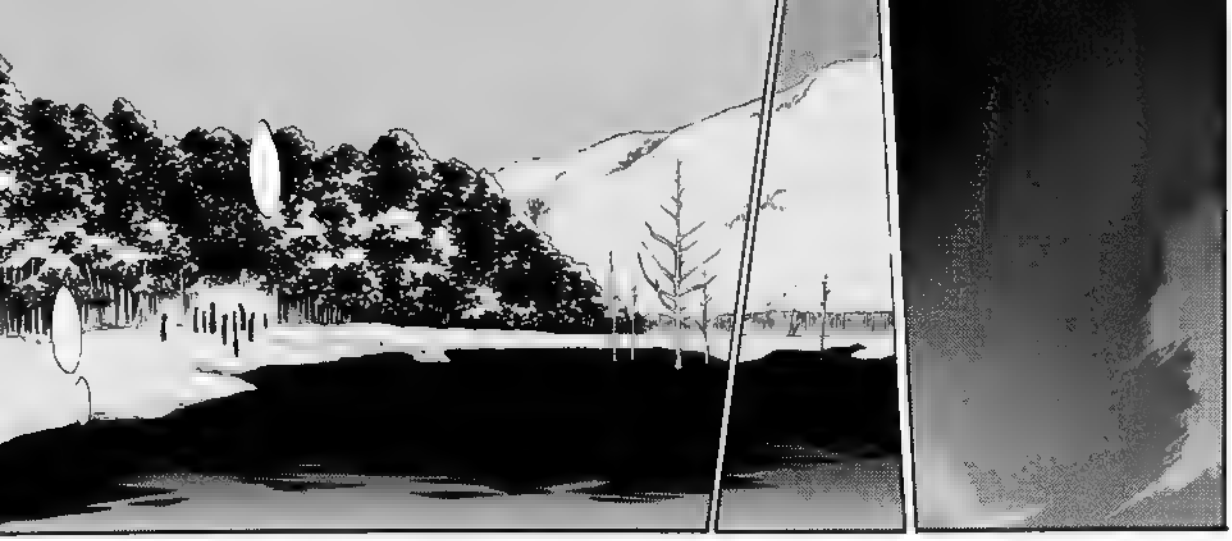
I...
I HAVE ...
!
...TO FIGHT .....
FIGHT .....
...AND KILL..... THE SEVEN STARS .....
SO MY BOND WITH KEISEI .....
... WASN'T ALL FOR NOTHING .....
HAVE TO..... PROVE .... THAT ...
BREATHE
.....
.....
DROP
SUCH STRONG REGRET .....
DID THIS OVERWHELMINGLY POWERFUL REGRET CAUSE THE BOND-SEVERING TO FAIL AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT AND BIRTH A CURSE.....?
DARK..... SO VERY DARK.....

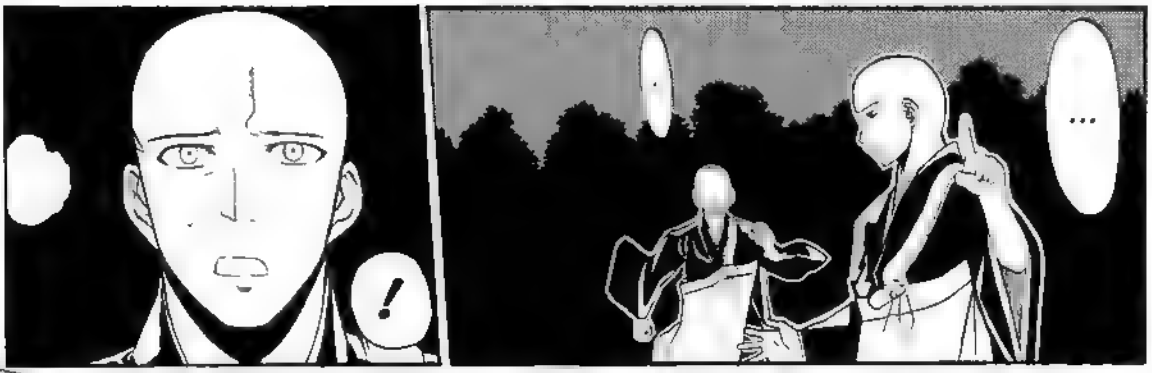
IT'S LIKE A DARK NIGHT THAT BLOCKS OUT EVEN THE STARLIGHT .....
THIS GIRL'S REGRET ...



YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO BECOME A MARTYR THE DAY YOU CHOSE THIS PATH.
..... AND THAT INCLUDES LIFE-AND-DEATH BATTLES AGAINST SHIKA-BANE SWARMS.
CALM DOWN.
THEY NEVER SAID WE'D BE UP AGAINST MURDERING BASTARDS LIKE THESE GUYS.
FORTY-TWO OF US..... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
SPLOOSH
..... SHIT.

FIND THEM !!
PICK UP ANY TRAIL YOU CAN.
IF YOU HAVE TIME TO COMPLAIN, THEN KEEP SEARCHING.
HOWEVER..... WE CANNOT AFFORD TO LOSE THE CONTRACTING MONK FROM THE GREAT HOLY ARAGAMI FAMILY.
...!



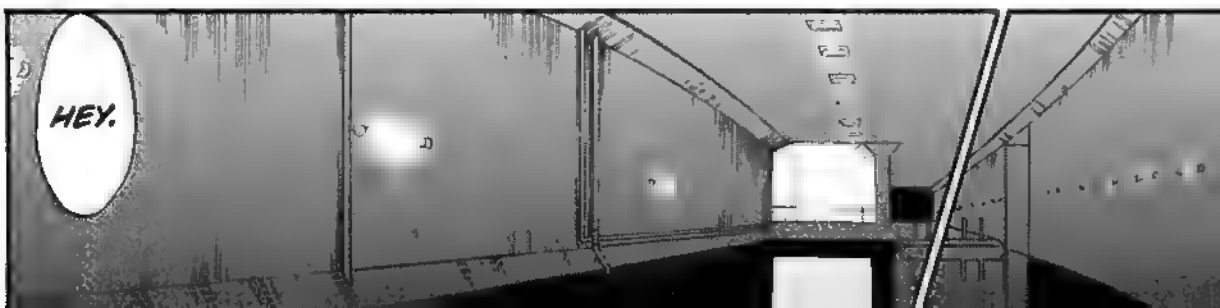

!
...

RIPPLE
RIPPLE

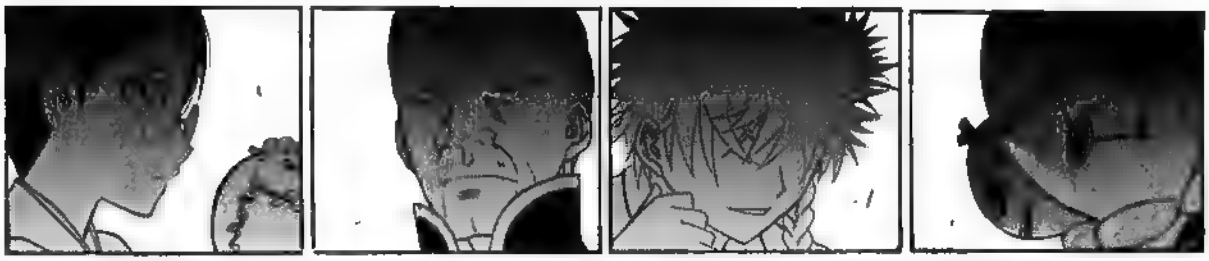
BUT THANKS TO THIS, OUR WORK WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH.
HMPH.
DON'T SULK, LI HONG.
I'M SORRY.

むぅ
POUT

NOW WE JUST ...
AND THE FINAL BIT OF GROUNDWORK FOR THE LAND OF THE DEAD IS COMPLETE.


HEY.

YOU'RE A RARE VISITOR, AKASHA.
HERE, ANYWAY.
七星
SEVEN STARS



CONCERNING THE NEXT STEP IN ESTABLISHING THE LAND OF THE DEAD...
YES.
TO THE SEVEN STARS?
A RE-QUEST ?

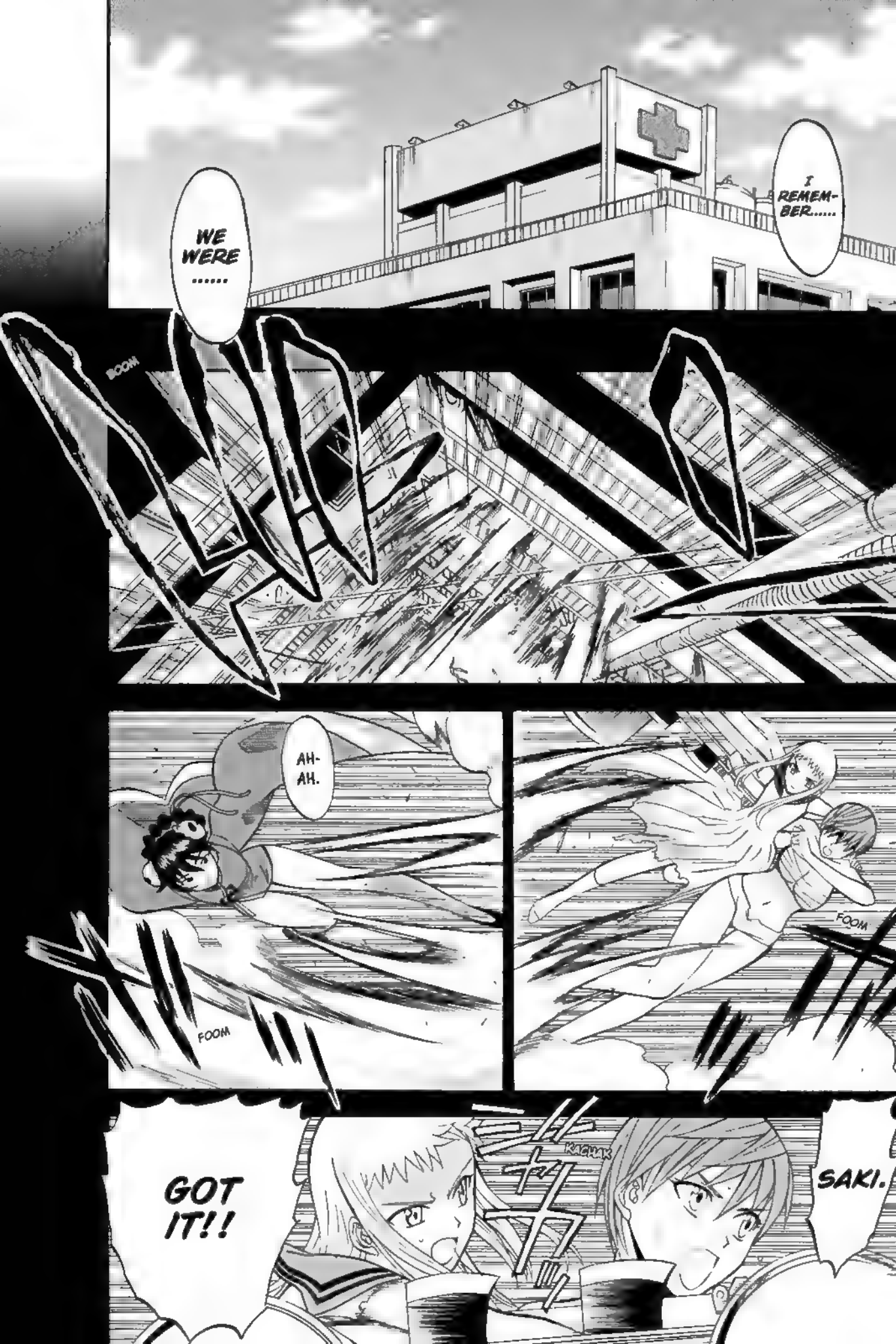
AS USUAL!!! SKETCH-FROM-MEMORY CHAMPIONSHIP!! (TAKAMASA EDITION)

AT FIRST I SAID, "HOW ABOUT DRAWING THE KING?" BUT MY ASSISTANTS CRIED OUT IN PROTEST...(LAUGHS)

DEATH 26: HUMANOIDS

MY ULTIMATE TREASURE.
(SIX MINUTES LATER, SAWAMIYA CRUSHED IT INTO DUST)
ZENBUNOSE FULLY-EXPOSED VERSION
SEE-THROUGH PARTS

TAKAMINE-SAMA.
SO YOU'RE AWAKE.
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
OKAY ..... I'M FINE.
I.....
WHY AM I STILL ALIVE?
TAKA-MINE-SAMA.
NEED ANYTHING? A DRINK, PERHAPS .....?
STAND

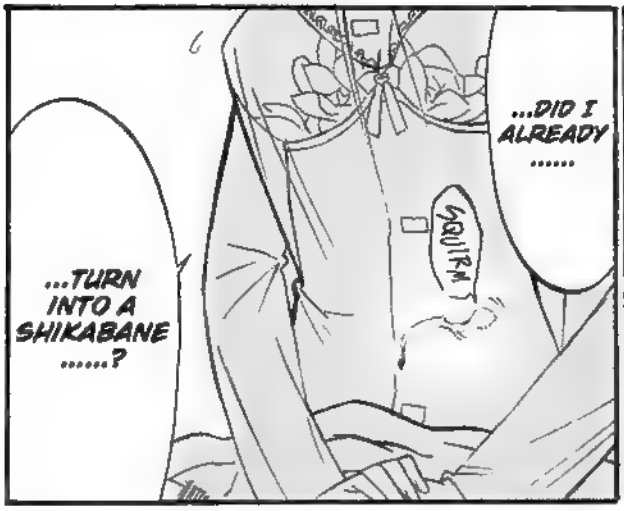

I REMEMBER.....
WE WERE .....
BOOM
AH-AH.
FOOM
FOOM
GOT IT!!
KACHAK
SAKI.

FWOOMP
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
!!
BOOM
THIS BARRAGE SHOULD BE ENOUGH .....
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
FWOOMP
ALL RIGHT .....
FWOOM
YOU THOUGHT THAT'D HELP YOU...
...GET AWAY?
!!
WHOOSH!

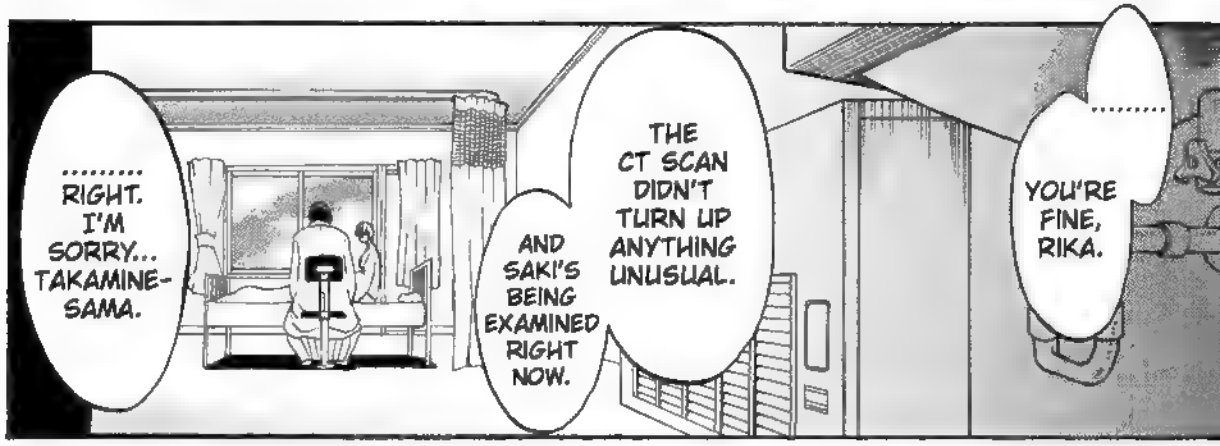
SLAM
WHAK
WHAK
WHAK
WHAK
WHAK
FSSHH
WHOOSH
!
I GET IT.
THAT WASN'T A BLADED OR BLUNT ATTACK — IT WAS A BLOW FROM THAT TALISMAN
I WASN'T EXPECTING THAT...
YES.
TMP
VERY INTER-ESTING.
AS A REWARD FOR MANAGING TO DAMAGE ME...
...I'LL SHOW YOU THIS.
SKID
FWOOM

OGYAHHHHHH...
THE TRUE POWER ...
... OF MY CURSE.
KERSHAM

NO TECHNIQUE OF OURS COULD MEASURE UP.
WE WERE NO MATCH FOR HER.


...TURN INTO A SHIKABANE .....?
SQUIRM
...DID I ALREADY .....

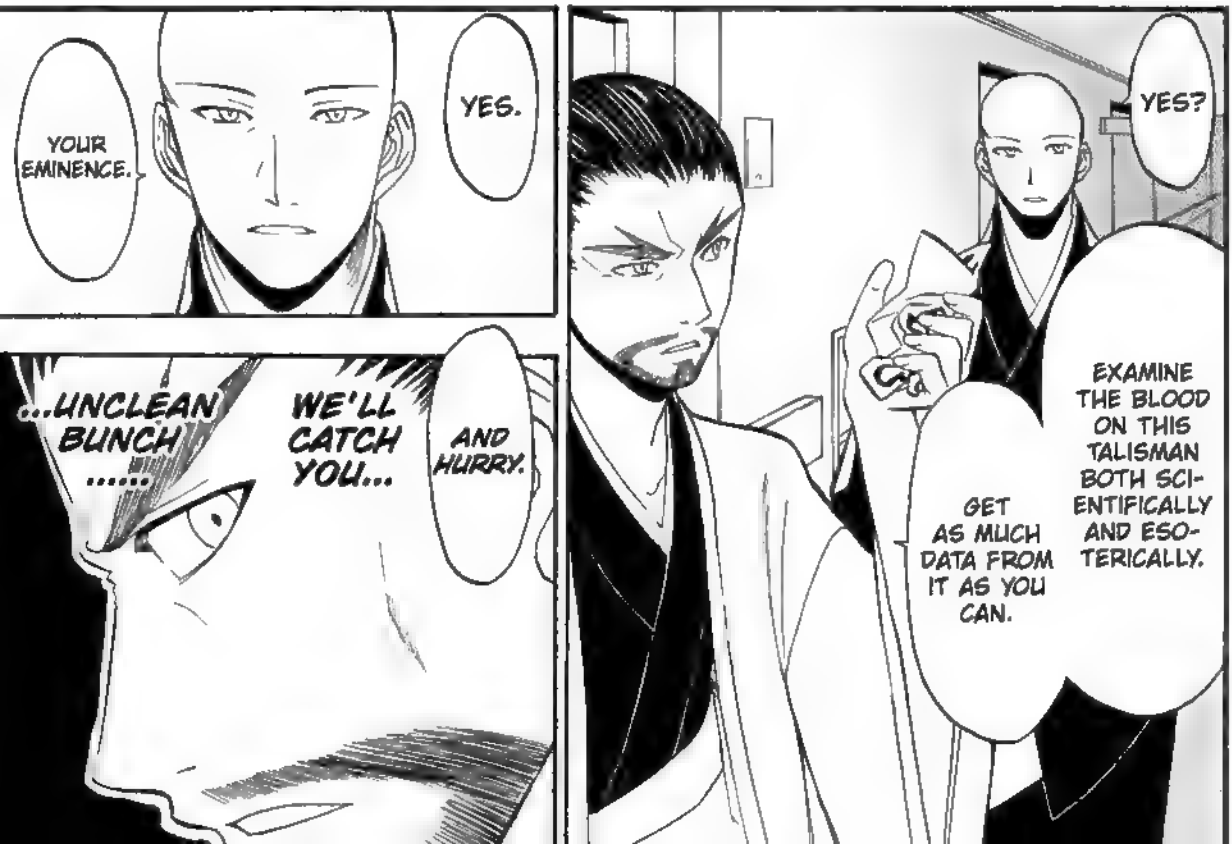
OR.....
WAS IT JUST LUCK...? OR IS THERE A REASON WE GOT AWAY .....?

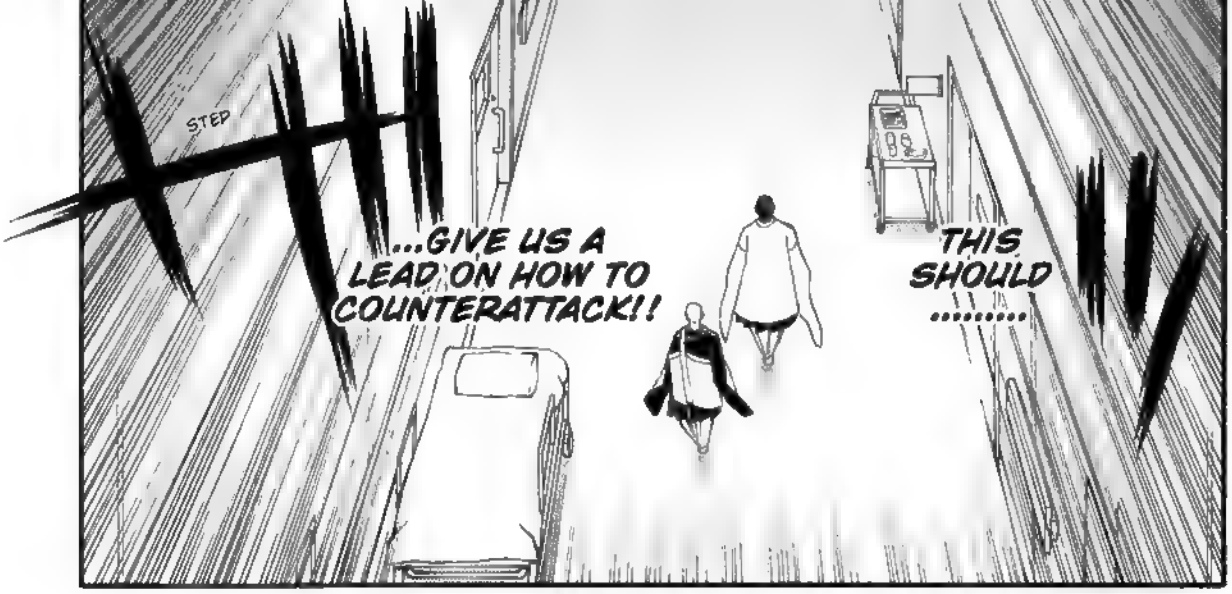

..... RIGHT. I'M SORRY... TAKAMINE-SAMA.
AND SAKI'S BEING EXAMINED RIGHT NOW.
THE CT SCAN DIDN'T TURN UP ANYTHING UNUSUAL.
..... YOU'RE FINE, RIKA.

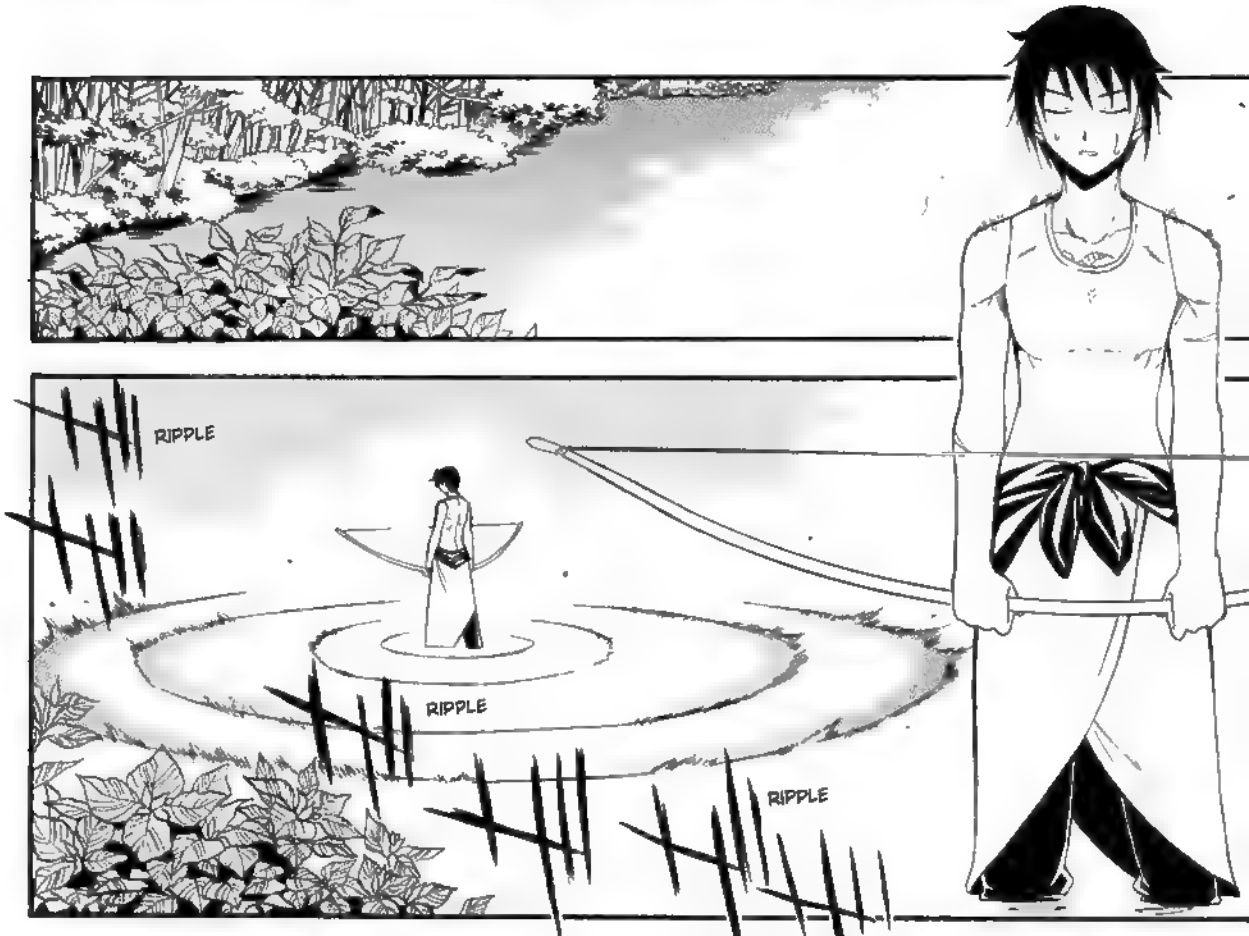
THIS TALISMAN..... IT HAS SOME BLOOD I DREW FROM THE OPPONENT.
TAKA-MINE-SAMA .....
RUSTLE

AFTER ALL OUR SACRIFICES... AFTER YOU TWO RISKED YOUR LIVES...THIS IS OUR ONLY LEAD.
I WON'T LET IT GO TO WASTE.
.....AHH.
IF A BOND HAS FORMED FROM IT...
...WE MAY BE ABLE TO LEARN SOME-THING.

HONDA.

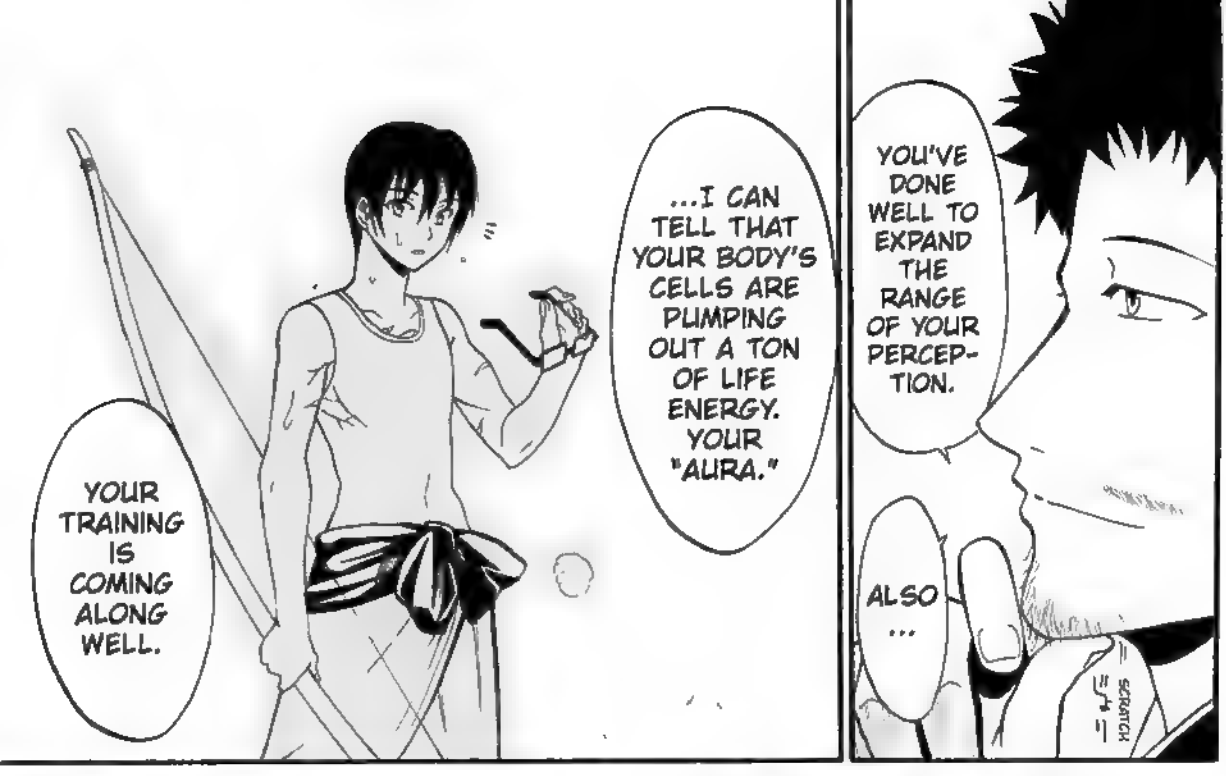

YOUR EMINENCE.
YES.
...UNCLEAN BUNCH.....
WE'LL CATCH YOU...
AND HURRY.
YES?
GET AS MUCH DATA FROM IT AS YOU CAN.
EXAMINE THE BLOOD ON THIS TALISMAN BOTH SCI-ENTIFICALLY AND ESO-TERICALLY.


STEP
...GIVE US A LEAD ON HOW TO COUNTERATTACK!!
THIS SHOULD .....


RIPPLE
RIPPLE
RIPPLE

WHOOPS. YOU SPOTTED ME.
I THOUGHT I WAS HIDING SO WELL .....
RUSTLE

SENSEI ?
BLINK


YOUR TRAINING IS COMING ALONG WELL.
...I CAN TELL THAT YOUR BODY'S CELLS ARE PUMPING OUT A TON OF LIFE ENERGY. YOUR "AURA."
YOU'VE DONE WELL TO EXPAND THE RANGE OF YOUR PERCEP-TION.
ALSO ...
SCRATCH

SHUDDER
!?
HUH !?
YOUR FIGURE'S ALSO DEVELOPING NICELY. MUSCLE IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES.

..... THANK YOU.

CRACK
IF ONLY YOU WERE A CUTIE LIKE ITSUKI-CHAN.....
THAT'S WHAT YOU MEANT?

YEAH. WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE I ABANDONED HIM OR ANYTHING.

... COME ON.
WAIT. WHAT'S GOING ON? DID YOU REALLY LEAVE OURI-KUN ON HIS OWN?
TO COME VISIT ME?

HE'S MAKING PROGRESS TOO, YOU KNOW.
AND I SENT ITSUKI TO GO CHECK ON HIM.
I EXPECT HE'LL START SHOWING RESULTS SOON, ASSUMING HE KEEPS UP THE HARD WORK.
GAH.
CRAP ...
YOU !!
HOP!
HIDING IN A BURROW, HUH...?
AND I WAS SO CLOSE TOO...
SLAM
!!
ACK.
CRAP .....
HOP
HOP

DING
...NOW THERE'S NO WAY OUT FOR YOU .....
...BUT ...
HAA.
I CAN ALREADY PERCEIVE IT!!
THE BOND...
TAP
14
...LIES THE DOOR LEADING TO THE BOND .....
BEYOND THOSE... FAR BEYOND...
DEEP OBSERVATION AND UNDERSTANDING.
THE RABBIT AND ITS MOTIONS ...
I CAN "SEE" IT .....
BREATHING..... IN.....AND OUT.....
TURNING ITS HEAD TO THE LEFT AND STEPPING FORWARD WITH ITS RIGHT PAW.....

THE RABBIT'S MOVEMENTS
AND THE BOND IS TELLING ME...
THIS IS A BOND.
SOMEHOW..... IT FEELS LIKE I'M CONNECTED TO ITS VERY BRAIN
OVER THERE...
WHOOSH
!!
GRAB
I DID—
UGH.
WHAM
I DID IT.
TWINGE
I DID IT!!
!
HA.

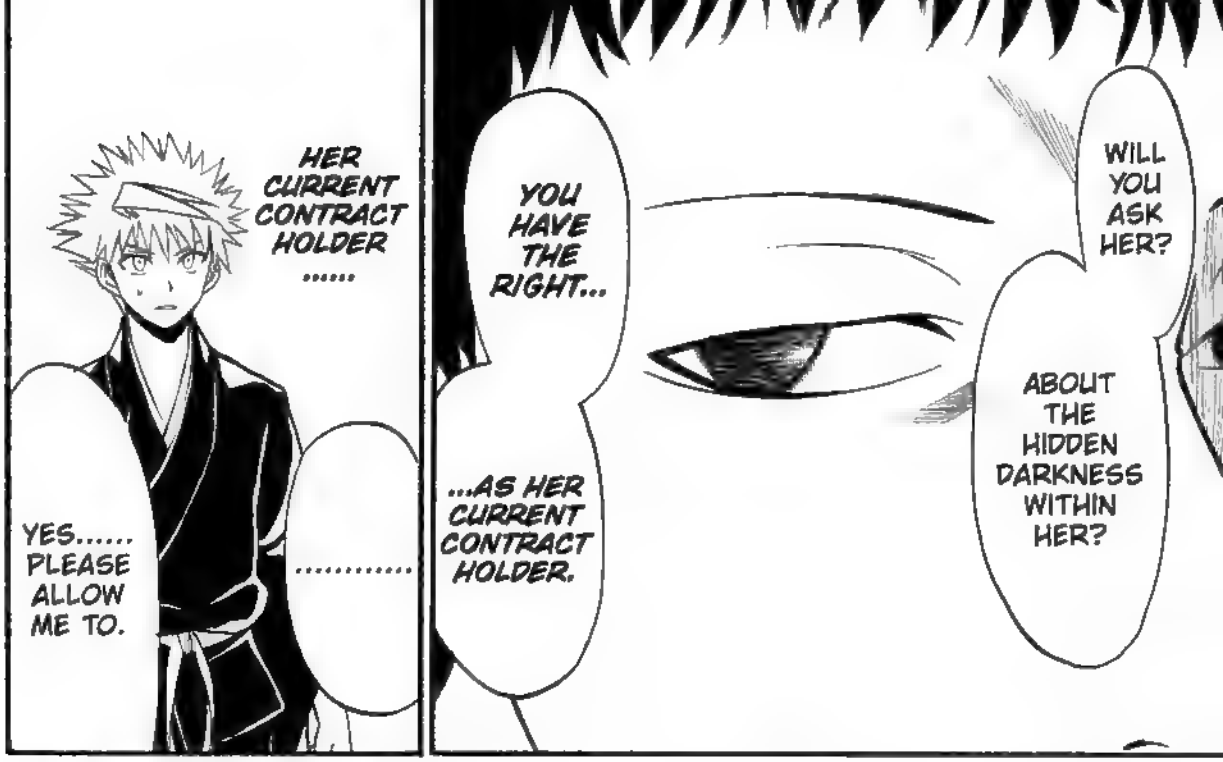
DAMN YOU!! COME QUIETLY!
SQUEAL
THRASH
OUCH !!
BASTARD! AREN'T YOU AN HERBIVORE !?
TRYING TO MAKE A MEAL OF ME!?
SQUEAL SQUEAL
FLAIL
FLAIL
.....
UM.
.....
OURI-SAN?
STEP
EH.
AH .....
!
.....
ARE YOU OKAY?
?
WHIP
YES. !!
I'M OKAY !!

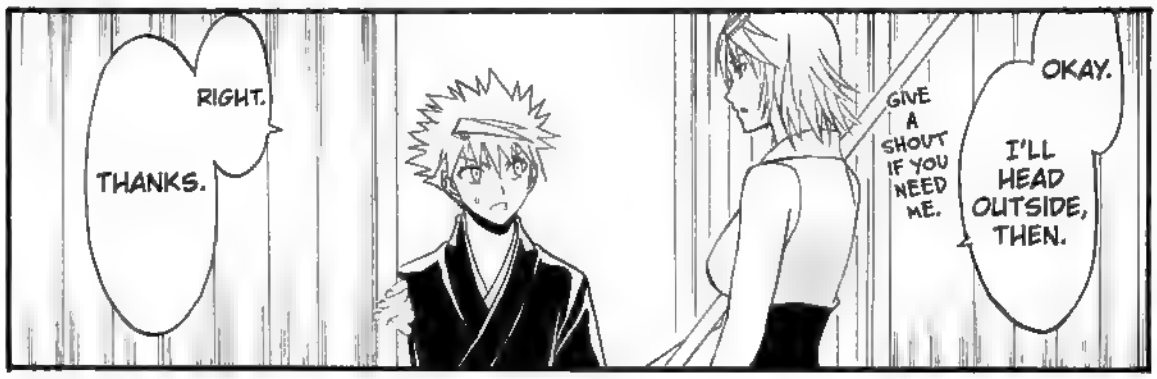
... UMEHARA SOUJOU WANTED YOU TO COME WITH ME .....
UMM. IN THAT CASE .....
EH?
SEE, SO OKAY I CAN DANCE!!
TOTALLY!! TOTALLY OKAY!!
HUH .....
WAVE
WAVE
?
AH-HA-HA.

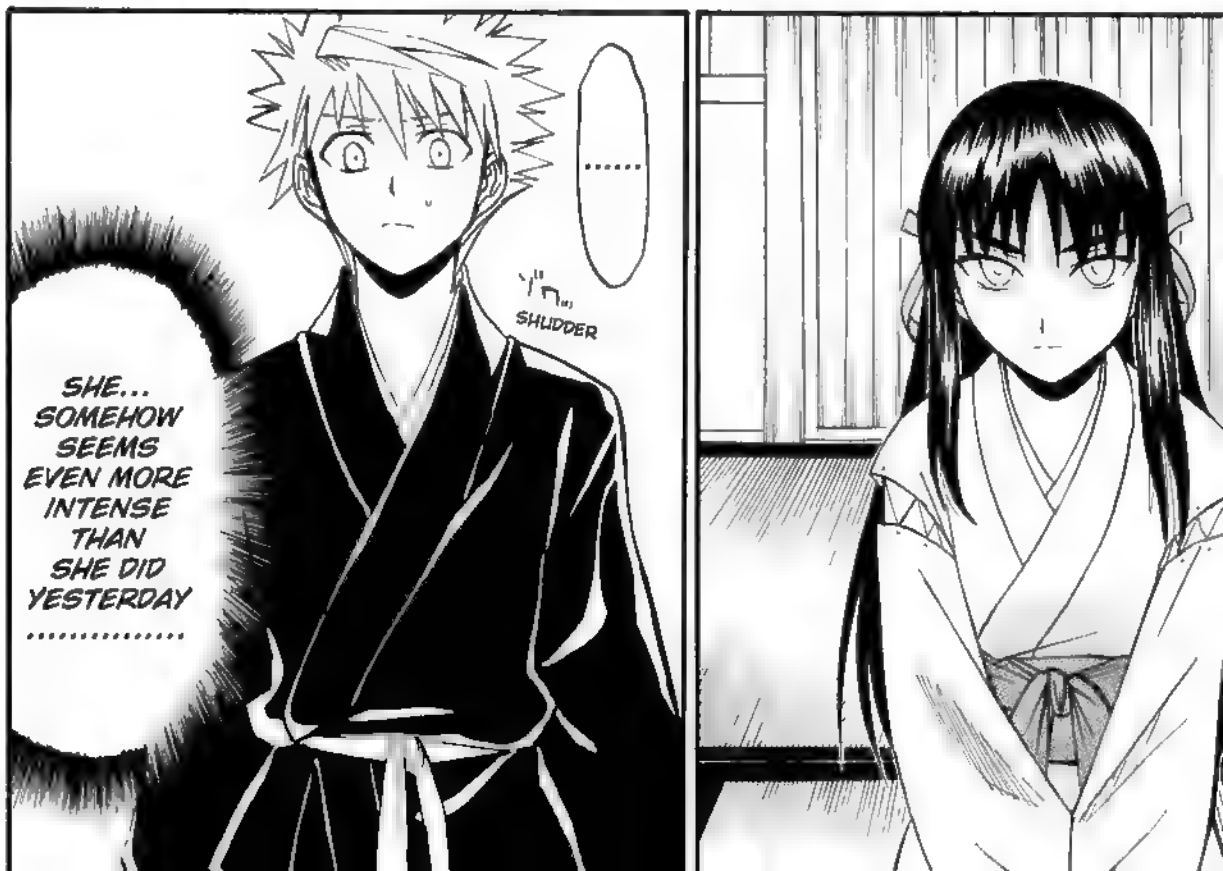
A CURSE ……!?
FOR REAL ?
YEAH ……
IT'S PRETTY RARE, ACTUALLY.
JUST AS SHIKABANE SOMETIMES CHANNEL AND PRESERVE THEIR REGRETS AS CURSES …
…SO TOO CAN CORPSE PRINCESSES MANIFEST CURSES, NOW AND THEN.

IT HAPPENED WHILE SHE ATTEMPTED TO SEVER THE BOND WITH HER OLD CONTRACT HOLDER.
SEEMS LIKE MAKINA-CHAN JUST REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO LET GO OF THAT SPECIAL BOND.
……

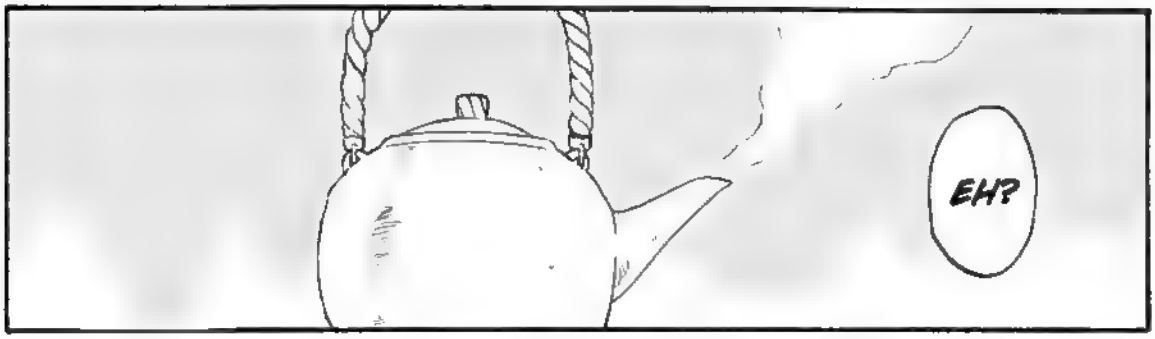
AND NOW …
… APPARENTLY SHE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU ALONE.
BUT I'LL HAVE SAWAMIYA POSTED RIGHT OUTSIDE THE ROOM.
EH?


WILL YOU ASK HER?
ABOUT THE HIDDEN DARKNESS WITHIN HER?
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT...
...AS HER CURRENT CONTRACT HOLDER.
HER CURRENT CONTRACT HOLDER .....
.....
YES..... PLEASE ALLOW ME TO.


OKAY.
I'LL HEAD OUTSIDE, THEN.
GIVE A SHOUT IF YOU NEED ME.
RIGHT.
THANKS.


.....
SHUDDER
SHE... SOMEHOW SEEMS EVEN MORE INTENSE THAN SHE DID YESTERDAY .....

IS THIS REALLY ALL RIGHT, SENSEI?
LEAVING SUCH A TASK TO OURI ALONE .....
CLOSE
MM-HM ...
WELL, IT'S SOMETHING THEY'D HAVE TO DEAL WITH EVENTUALLY.
BETTER SOONER THAN LATER.
ESPE-CIALLY BECAUSE ...
...IT LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT SOME PRESSING BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO AS WELL.


EH?

.....WHAT'D ...
...YOU JUST SAY?
DID I STUT-TER?
... WELL ...
...LET ME REPEAT MYSELF.

I WANT YOU TO QUIT...
...BEING MY CONTRACTING MONK.

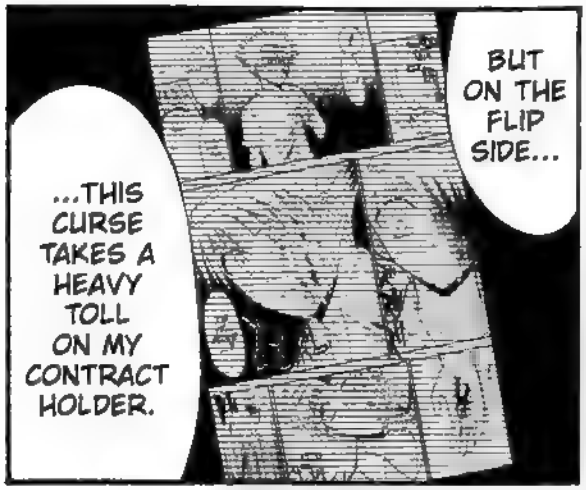
.....
BUT WHY?
.....

TOO WEAK..... TO BE MY PARTNER.
BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO WEAK.
HOP
.....WHAT'S THAT?
—!?
OOZE
.....WHY?
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW .....?

APPROACH
.....
WATCH.
SEE THESE CUFFS?
I ACTUALLY EXPERIENCED THAT NOT TOO LONG AGO.
NORMALLY, THEY STRIP A CORPSE PRINCESS OF HER POWER. WE CAN'T BREAK THEM
.....
JANGLE
THEY HAVE SCRIPTURE CARVED ONTO THE FRONT SURFACE.
OOZE
STRAIN
.....
BUT NOW
...
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
SNAP
CRACK
SNAP

NOW ...
...I CAN TEAR THEM OFF, JUST LIKE THAT.
CLATTER
CLATTER
SWAT

THAT'S THE POWER OF MY CURSE.
...!!


BUT ON THE FLIP SIDE...
...THIS CURSE TAKES A HEAVY TOLL ON MY CONTRACT HOLDER.

THE POWER I NEED NOW.
GIVEN TO ME BY MY BOND WITH KEISEI.

WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY?
..... GET IT?

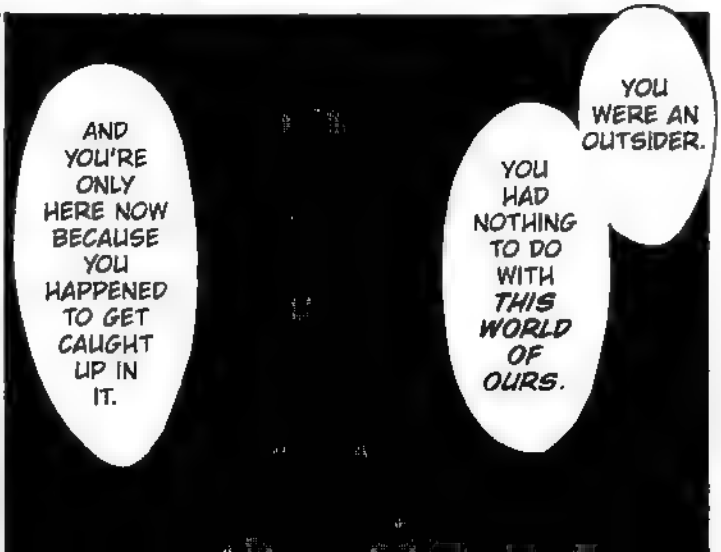
THAT...
...YOU DON'T..... NEED ME.....?
RIGHT.....
NO...
MORE THAN THAT..... YOU'RE A HIN-DRANCE.

THE MEMORIES OF KEISEI THAT SEEING YOU DREDGES UP FOR ME...
...!
THEY BRING ME TOO CLOSE TO THE REGRETS I HAVE OVER HIS DEATH. THAT POWER.

...FROM THE START...

FSSHH
FSSHH
FSSHH

SO GO HOME.
BACK WHERE YOU ACTUALLY BELONG.


YOU WERE AN OUTSIDER.
YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS WORLD OF OURS.
AND YOU'RE ONLY HERE NOW BECAUSE YOU HAPPENED TO GET CAUGHT UP IN IT.

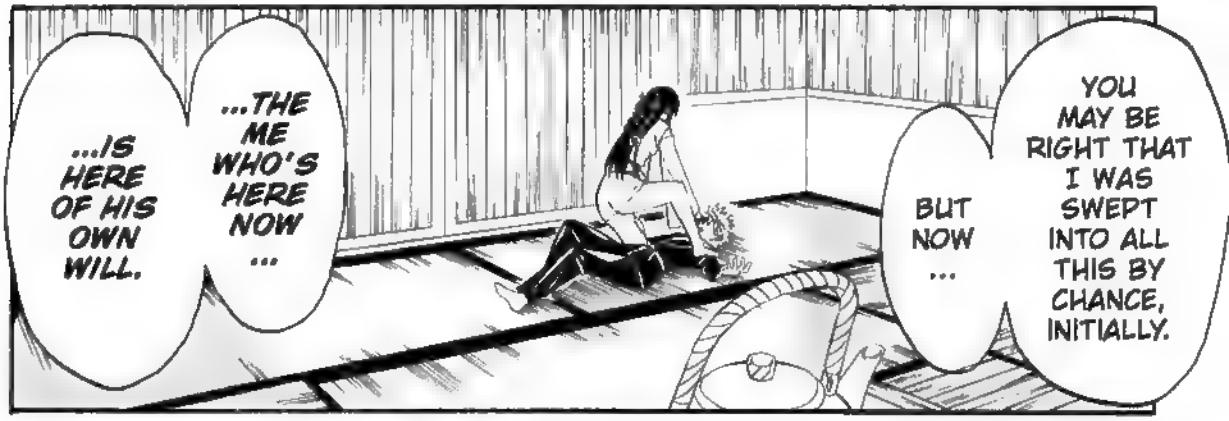
WHAT'S ..... THAT?
JUST NOW..... WHAT'D YOU SAY?
NO!!
...LET ME REPEAT MYSELF.
WELL ...
..... DID I STUTTER ?
SLAM
I SAY "NO" !!
I'M NOT GOING HOME.
I WON'T QUIT AS YOUR CON-TRACTING MONK .....!!

FWIP
SLAM
!!

GUESS YOU COULDN'T TAKE THE HINT, HUH?
THIS WASN'T A "REQUEST" YOU COULD REFUSE.
YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO ARGUE HERE.

I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE ...
... CONTRACTING MONKS ARE BASICALLY SOLDIERS. THEY'VE GOT TO BE IN PERFECT HEALTH.
SO IF I WERE TO CRUSH YOUR EYES RIGHT HERE AND NOW ...
...THAT'D AUTO-MATICALLY MAKE YOU INELIGIBLE.

LET ME..... SAY ONE THING FIRST.
BUT...
STRAIN
IF THAT WOULD SATISFY YOU, HOSHIMURA-SAN.....
.....
DO IT.


...IS HERE OF HIS OWN WILL.
...THE ME WHO'S HERE NOW ...
BUT NOW ...
YOU MAY BE RIGHT THAT I WAS SWEPT INTO ALL THIS BY CHANCE, INITIALLY.

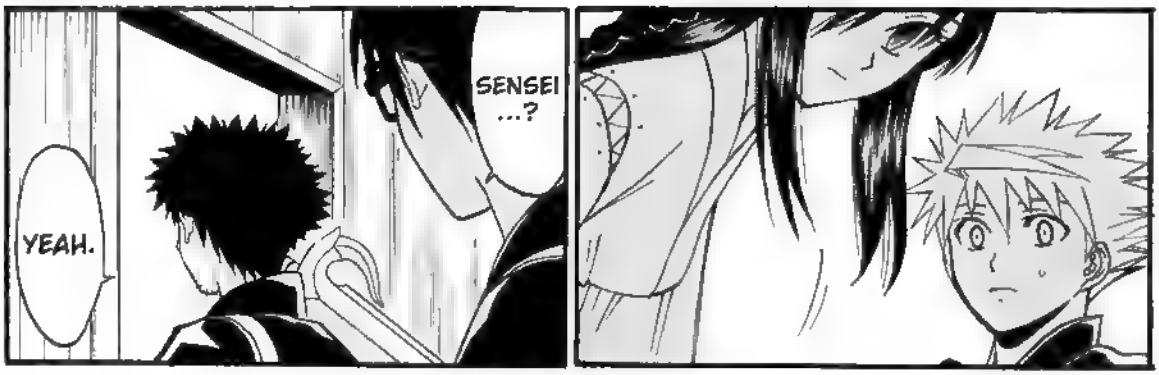
STOP THINKING THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE...
... GRIEVING OVER BIG BRO'S DEATH, YOU DUMMY !!
AND..... ALSO...

YEAH.
I'VE GOT TO HELP SAVE ALL THE PEOPLE BIG BRO WAS MEANT TO SAVE.
THERE'S NO WAY ...
...I CAN FORGET ABOUT IT AND KEEP LIVING!!
.....
RIGHT.
THAT'S ALL YOU HAD TO SAY?

F-WIP
THAT'S A SHAME.

!
ENOUGH !!
FREEZE
HA!!!
T-TUD

SORRY.
BUT BEFORE YOU FINISH, I'VE GOTTA INTERRUPT.
THE SITUATION'S CHANGED.
YOUR TRAINING IS OVER.


SENSEI ...?
YEAH.

SEEMS A NUMBER OF SHIKABANE HAVE SNUCK INTO THE SUBURBS OF YAMA CITY.
IT'S NOT CONFIRMED, BUT REPORTS ARE SAYING THAT...
...HAZAMA OF THE SEVEN STARS IS AMONG THEM .....

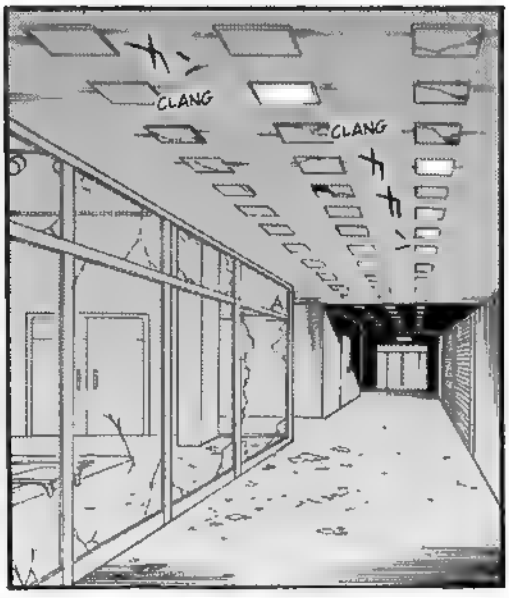
IT SEEMS LIKE DECENT PROOF THAT THE UNCLEAN BUNCH IS PLANNING TO INVADE SOON.
WHEN THAT HAPPENS ...
...I'M SURE YOU WON'T WANT TO BE HELD BACK BECAUSE THERE'RE STILL FORMALITIES TO TAKE CARE OF CONCERNING YOUR NEW CONTRACTING MONK, RIGHT?
..... RIGHT.

UMM .....
YOU SAID THE SUBURBS OF YAMA .....?
THEIR LAST PROTECTOR WAS KEISEI TAGAMI, AND THEIR CURRENT ONE IS TAKAMASA SOUJI.
IN OTHER WORDS ...

...WE'RE TALKING ABOUT ...
...YANATSU CITY AND YOUR VERY OWN IKAI CITY.
!!

GORILLA
スポーツセンター

JANGLE
COME.
COME, SPIRITS.
YOU MASSES OF RESENTMENT AND DESIRE, DEEP IN THE ABYSS OF DARKNESS.
JANGLE


CLANG
CLANG

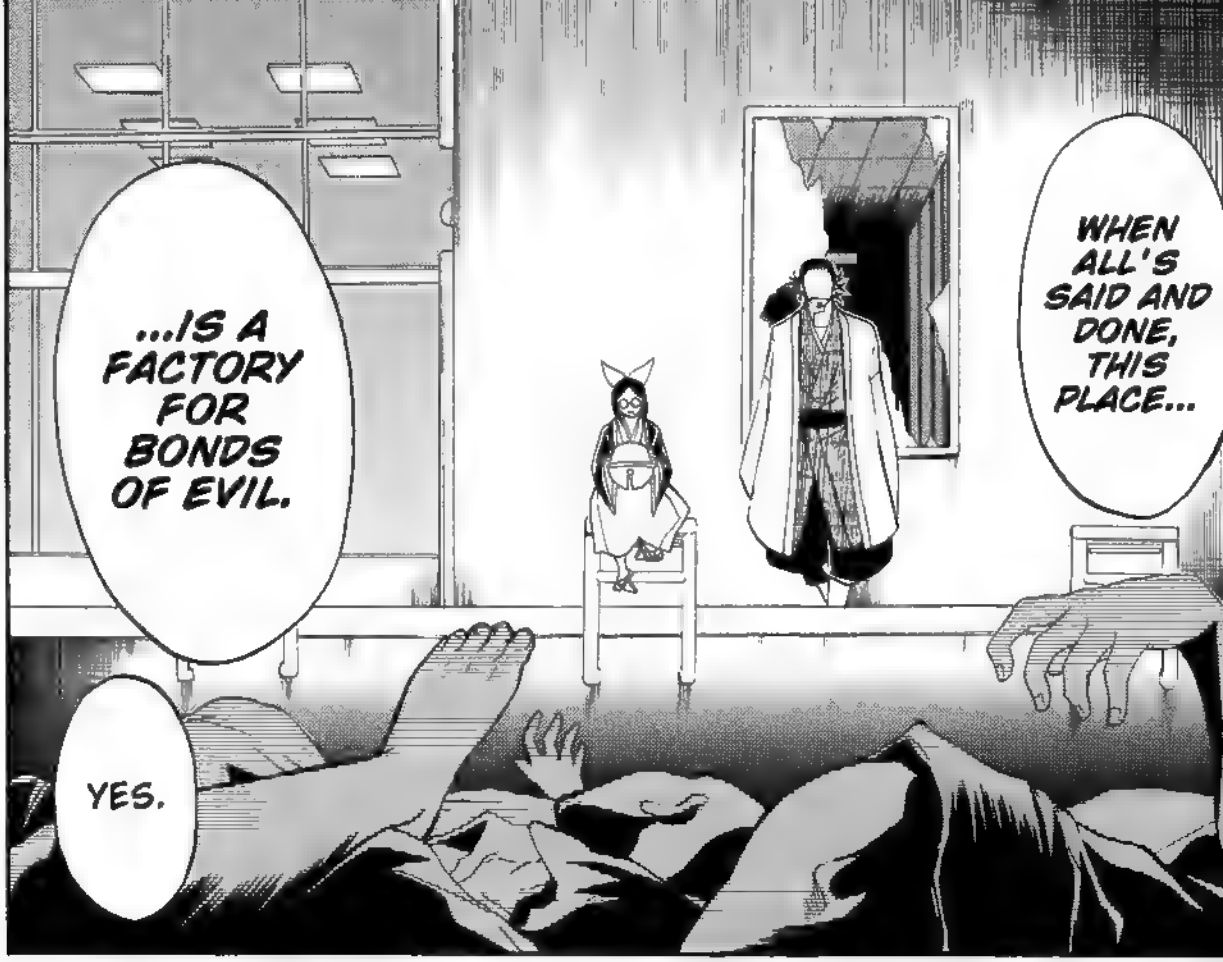
THE BODIES YOU NEED IN ORDER TO RETURN ...
...ARE RIGHT HERE.
JANGLE
SKRITCH

SPLASH
.....
KAH.
SPLASH
AHH
.....
GAH...
AH.
HAH.
SPLASH
MELD
MELD
TWITCH
!!
DING
GOOD MORNING, MY DEAR.
TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE, NOW.
OH! ♡
SPLASH
SATISFY YOUR RESENTMENT AND DESIRES AS YOU PLEASE.
GO OUTSIDE..... AND DO WHAT YOU'RE MEANT TO.

WHAT A CHANNELER YOU ARE, ENA.
WELL DONE, INDEED.
OHH .....
TEP
TEP
WHIRL
.....
DRIP
DRIP

MY TRUE SPECIALTY IS CONJURING DOPPELGÄNGERS FROM THE VENGEFUL SPIRITS OF THE LIVING, BUT...
ACTUALLY ...
...AS A BEAUTIFUL GENIUS MEDIUM GIRL OF MANY TALENTS, A TASK AS SIMILAR AS THIS IS HARDLY BEYOND ME.
FUFU.
WELL...

.....
THIS GUY.
IGNORING ME.
BY THE WAY, WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS?
HMM?
BUT OU'RE A OY.
.....
GIRL, REALLY?
APATHETIC
BE-CAUSE A TABOO REALM ...
...MUST INCLUDE THE CON-SCIOUSNESS OF THE HUMANS WHO LIVE IN IT.
..... YES.
CUTTING OFF THE PULSE LINES AND STOPPING THE ENERGY FLOW ALONE ISN'T ENOUGH.
I HEARD IT'S TO MAKE THE TABOO REALM?
OHH.
SO THAT'S HOW IT WORKS.
AND THIS AREA WILL BECOME WHAT WE CALL A TABOO REALM.
THEY'LL START TO BOND VIA MALICE AND DECEIT.


WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE, THIS PLACE...
...IS A FACTORY FOR BONDS OF EVIL.
YES.

SPLASH
SPLASH
BLUB
BLUB
SPLASH
UNLIKE SHIKA-BANE ...
...THESE BEINGS POSSESS HUMAN WILL AND BONDS, BUT THEY LACK ALL VIRTUE AND CONSCIENCE.
THEY CAN HARDLY BE CALLED "HUMAN" ANYMORE. NO. THEY'RE "HUMANOIDS."
JANGLE
...AND SPREAD THEIR HATE.
CREEP
THEY'LL FLOOD THE CITY...

GOOD MORNING, MY LITTLE BUNDLE OF REGRET.
WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
SPLASH
COUGH
GASP
GRASP
I..... I WANT TO FULFILL .....
.....MY DESIRES.
AT MY..... SCHOOL.....
TWIST
MY DESIRES.
I'LL FULFILL MY WISHES.
AT..... MY SCHOOL .....
KILL THE BOYS. STEAL THE GIRLS .....
TWINGE
TWINGE
AT..... MY SCHOOL .....
AT IKAI HIGH.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE

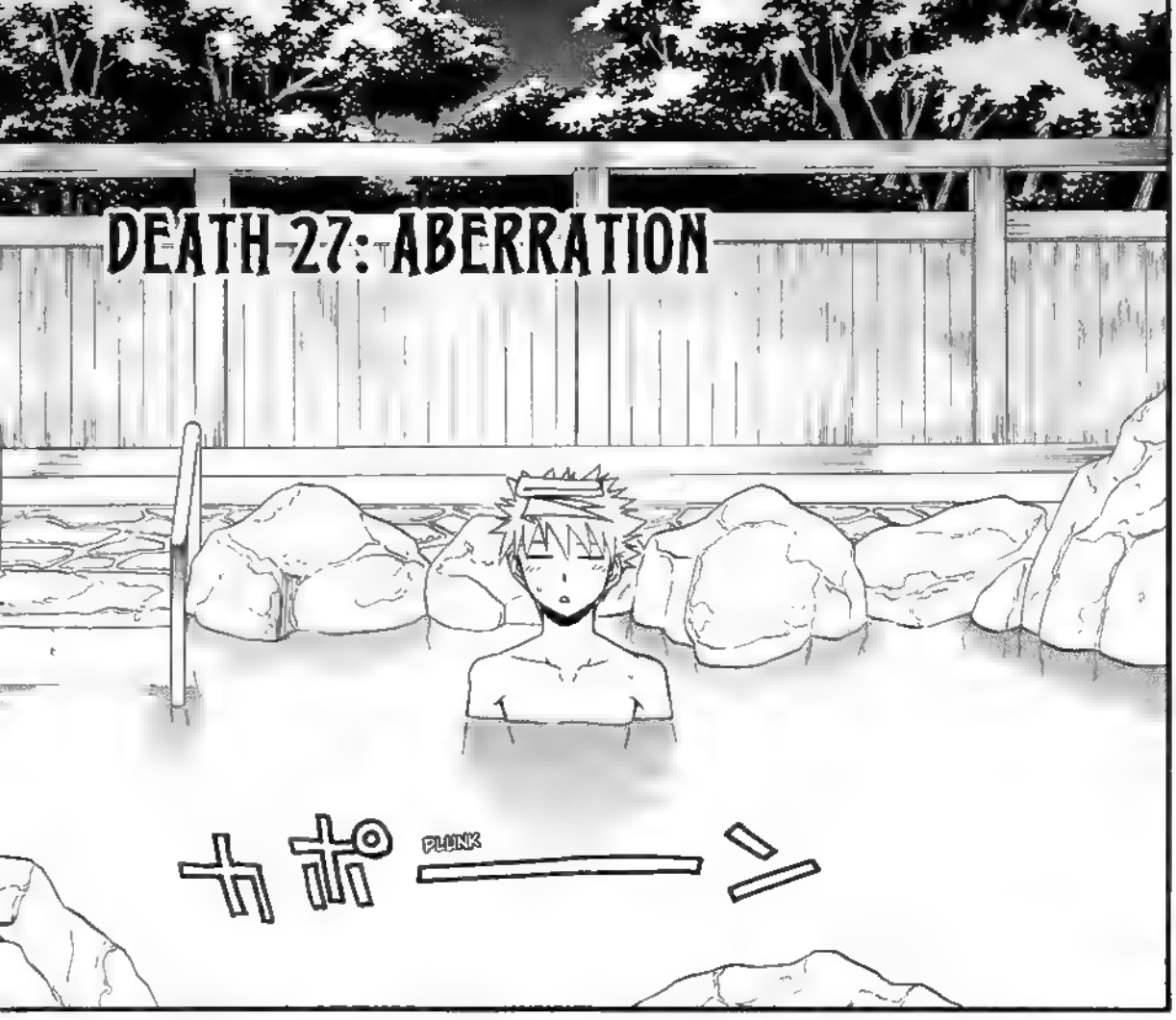
- CORPSE PRINCESS PRODUCTION HELPERS:
  SAKANO-SAN
  OOSUMI-SAN
  YAMAUCHI-SAN
  KATOU-SAN
  YOSHIOKA-SAN
  TSUJI-SAN

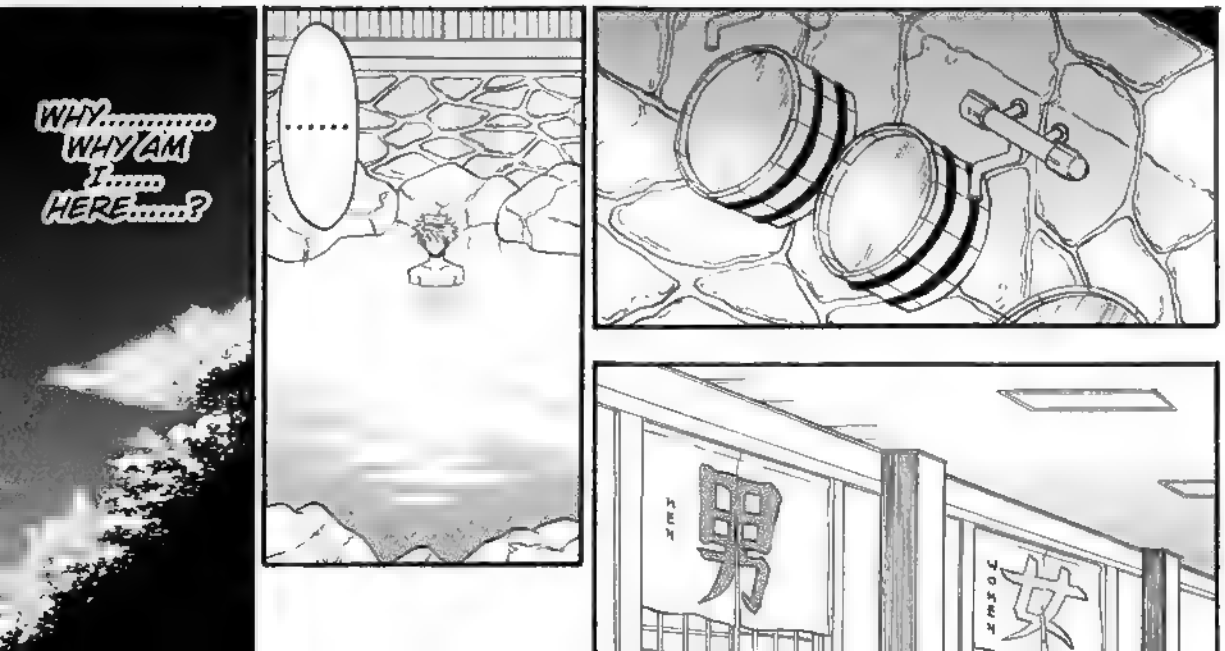
- EMERGENCY HELPERS:
  MEGUMI-SAN
  NIJOU-DON
  USAMI-SAN

- SUPERVISOR:
  SHIMIZU

AND THANKS TO ALL THE READERS OUT THERE!

DEATH 27: ABERRATION

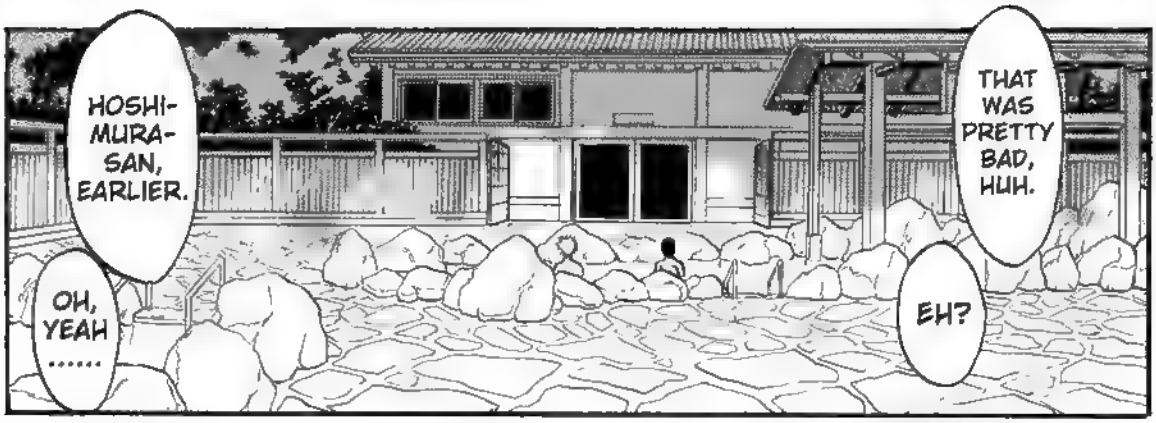




PUMP
WE'RE GOING TO THE HOT SPRINGS !!
.....UM, SENSEI .....
I THOUGHT WE WERE IN A RUSH TO GET BACK?
HUH ?
HOT SPRINGS ?
IT'LL BE WORTH RESTING UP FOR TONIGHT, SINCE WE'RE HERE ANYWAY.
...BECAUSE ANOTHER LIFE-THREATENING BATTLE PROBABLY AWAITS US TOMORROW.
.....
OH, YEAH, WELL, I THOUGHT SO TOO.
BUT COME ON—WE'RE DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS! BY THE TIME WE CLIMB DOWN, THE LAST TRAIN'LL HAVE ALREADY PULLED OUT.
.....
THIS GUY...
AHA HA-

I WANT YOU TO QUIT...
.....BUT...
...BEING MY CON-TRACT-ING MONK.
STARTING TOMORROW .....
THE BATTLE BEGINS... AND I'M PART OF IT.....
SPLASH
SPLASH
PAT
NOW.....THE WAY THINGS ARE.....!
WILL WE REALLY BE OKAY.....?
BLUB
BLUB
YOU FEELING LIGHT-HEADED?
WHAT'S GOING ON, OURI?
?
SLIDE
TAKA-MASA-SAN .....
!
SCARS .....!?

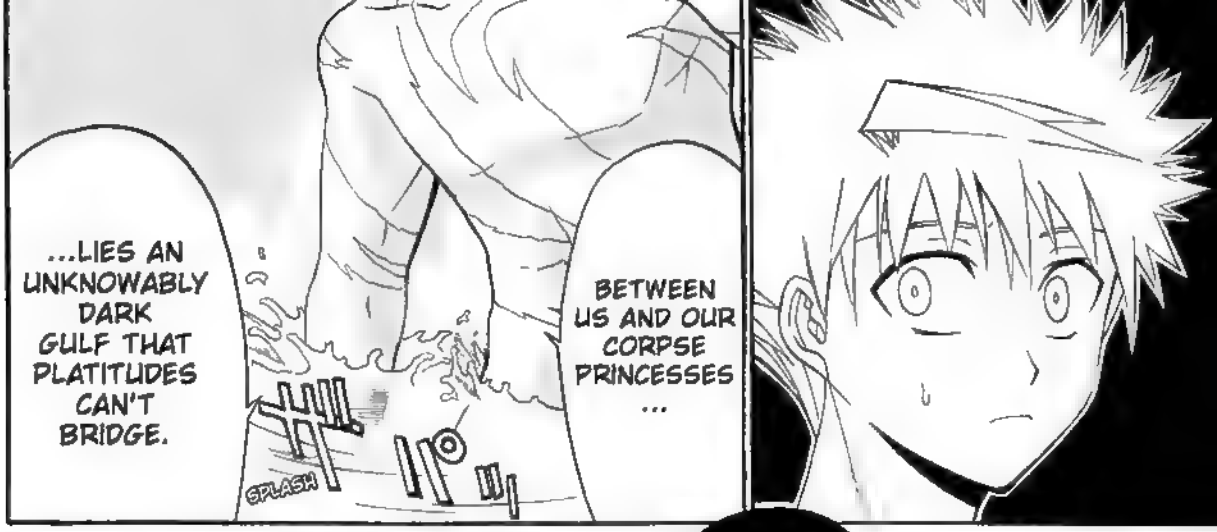
.....
GLANCE ちら


HOSHI-MURA-SAN, EARLIER.
OH, YEAH .....
EH?
THAT WAS PRETTY BAD, HUH.

STEAM
..... YEAH, BUT.....
AND THAT'S BECAUSE NO MATTER WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE, HE ACTUALLY ACKNOWL-EDGES YOU.
UMEHARA-SENSEI MIGHT'VE SAID WHAT HE SAID, BUT HE DIDN'T FORCIBLY END YOUR CONTRACT.
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T STRESS YOURSELF OUT.

LIKE.....WHAT HOSHIMURA-SAN WANTS. WHAT SHE'S REALLY AFTER.....
DON'T GET IT AT ALL
BLUB
BLUB
...DON'T REALLY GET IT.
I.....

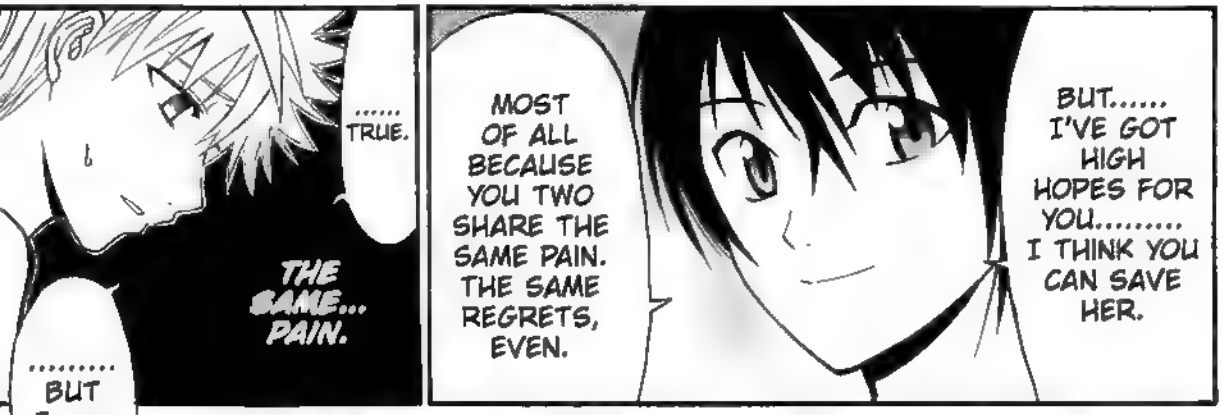
PLISH
WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER A LONG TIME, YOU SEE.
IN A VAGUE SENSE..... YEAH, I DO.
RIGHT... I SEE.
HMM..... MM-HM .....
I MEAN, DO YOU KNOW WHAT ITSUKI-SAN IS THINKING?
DO YOU, TAKAMASA-SAN?
IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT PRACTICAL LIFE EXPERIENCE, YEAH.
HMM ...
SO YOU'RE SAYING I'M JUST NOT EXPERIENCED ENOUGH YET?
..... YOU MEAN ABOUT WHAT HOSHI-MURA-SAN'S THINKING .....?
UNDER-STAND ...
AND YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO UNDER-STAND THAT VERY SOON.
BUT OURI.
BEING A CON-TRACTING MONK IS A DIFFERENT MATTER ENTIRELY.
SHE'S NOT HUMAN ANYMORE.
UNDERSTAND THAT SHE'S AN ABERRATION THAT EXISTS TO KILL SHIKABANE.
NOT QUITE.
ABOUT THE FACT THAT THAT GIRL IS A CORPSE PRINCESS .....


...LIES AN UNKNOWABLY DARK GULF THAT PLATITUDES CAN'T BRIDGE.
SPLASH
BETWEEN US AND OUR CORPSE PRINCESSES ...

BUT IN THE END, AFTER LOSING SO VERY MUCH...
...I CAME TO THAT REALI-ZATION .....
THESE SCARS OF MINE ...
...ARE REMNANTS OF A TIME WHEN I DIDN'T GET THAT.

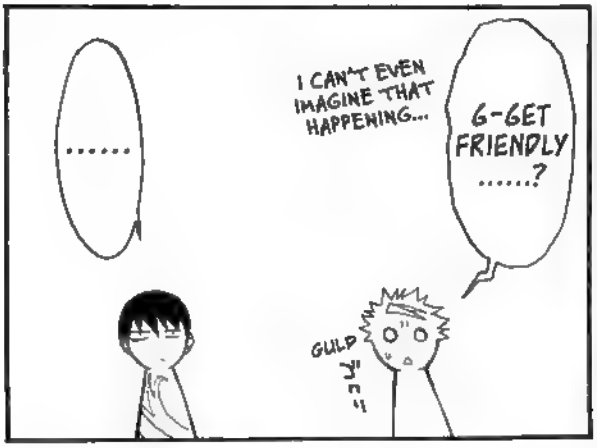
.....
A PARTIAL VIEW..... OF THAT GULF.
YOU CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF HER DARKNESS .....
YOU FELT IF BEFORE, DIDN'T YOU?

A CORPSE PRINCESS'S POWER IS ITSELF AN ABERRATION.
AND RIGHT NOW HOSHIMURA-SAN IS ENRAPTURED BY THAT POWER.
IF YOU DON'T COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT, HERE AND NOW ...
...THE SCARS YOU'LL BEAR ARE GOING TO BE A WHOLE LOT WORSE THAN MINE.
!


BUT..... I'VE GOT HIGH HOPES FOR YOU..... I THINK YOU CAN SAVE HER.
MOST OF ALL BECAUSE YOU TWO SHARE THE SAME PAIN. THE SAME REGRETS, EVEN.
..... TRUE.
THE SAME... PAIN.
..... BUT I.....

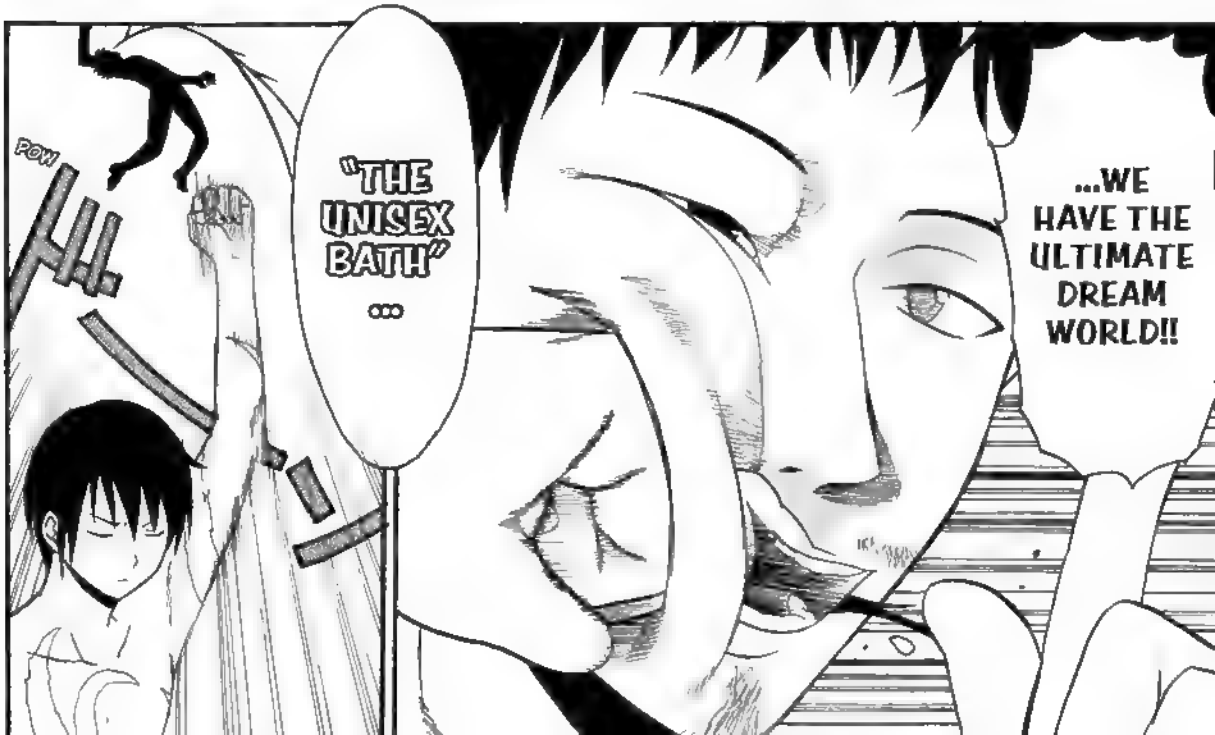
そぼ ば
SPLASH
FU FU FU.

HE CAME WITH A SNORKEL, JUST TO MAKE THIS ENTRANCE .....?
YOU SEEM TROUBLED, BOYS.
I HEARD THE WHOLE CONVER-SATION.
GAPE
ぱく ぱく


.....
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE THAT HAPPENING...
G-GET FRIENDLY .....?
GULP
ごくん

IT'S SIMPLE. MAKINA-CHAN JUST NEEDS TO GET FRIENDLY WITH YOU, OURI-KUN.
STOP OVER-THINKING IT SO CLUMSILY.
PLANT THAT DESIRE IN HER, AND EVERY-THING'LL BE PEACHY.

FOR THAT .....
HMPH.
AHH.


POW
"THE UNISEX BATH" ∞∞
...WE HAVE THE ULTIMATE DREAM WORLD!!

BAH..... I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT PEEPING!! ONCE THE GIRLS GIVE YOU PERMISSION, THEN IT BECOMES A FULL-ON UNIXSEX BATH!!
BESIDES... PEEPING IS A CRIME, SENSEI!!
AND THIS IS A CLERGYMAN ...?
HARSH DISCIPLE HE'S GOT .....
SENSEI, I KNOW THAT WHEN YOU GET THAT SERIOUS LOOK, IT USUALLY MEANS YOU'RE ABOUT TO WORK SOME STUPID GAG.
YES .....
YOU!! YOU REALLY HIT ME, TAKA-MASA!
Y—
SPLURT
WAHH!!
HOLD ON A SEC!!
AH... SURE.
I NEED SOME MILK.
COME ON..... THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME.
LET'S GO, OURI.
ALL RIGHT!! I HEAR YOU!!
IN THAT CASE..... YOU WANT A METHOD THAT NO ONE CAN COMPLAIN ABOUT? A WAY THAT'LL EVEN THRILL THE GIRLS THEMSELVES?
IF THAT'S YOUR STYLE..... LET'S GO WITH THIS STRATEGY !!
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
.....

MMMM!
♪
SPLASH
NO.
PSSHH
HUH.....? HEY, MAKINA-CHAN. DID YOU JUST GET A SHIVER DOWN YOUR SPINE?
!
SHUDDER

SPLASH
!
HEY ...
WHAT SORT OF GUY WAS HE? THIS KEISEI.
.....

THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK YOU, MAKINA-CHAN..... IF THAT'S OKAY?
TAGAMI SHOU-SOUJOU, THAT IS.
SEEMS HE WAS AN AC-QUAINTANCE OF TAKA-MASA'S, BUT I NEVER REALLY KNEW HIM.

WHAT SORT OF GUY COULD GET YOU TO CARE ABOUT HIM SO MUCH, MAKINA-CHAN?
...AND I GUESS I'M JUST CURIOUS.
BUT SHE'S NOT HERE NOW ...

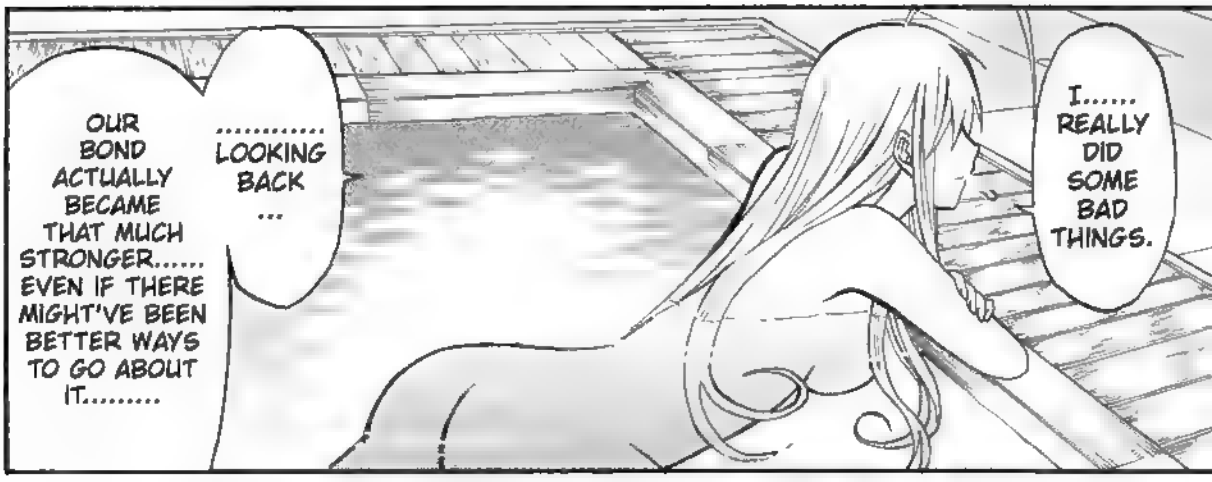
SHE SAID I'D JUST END UP INTENSIFYING YOUR REGRETS, OR SOMETHING.
SAWAMIYA-SAN ACTUALLY STOPPED ME FROM ASKING AT ONE POINT.

YUP..... SHE'S A TERRIBLE LIAR.
I SEE RIGHT THROUGH HER.
SPLASH
I JUST GET A LITTLE DEPRESSED ABOUT IT SOMETIMES .....
I DIDN'T CARE THAT MUCH !!
SPLASH
EH ...
IT'S ..... JUST ...
I THINK, TO ME...HE FELT LIKE "SUPPORT" .....
AFTER MY WHOLE FAMILY WAS KILLED .....
...I HAD NOBODY ELSE TO RELY ON, SO I TURNED TO MY CONTRACTING MONK FOR SUPPORT .....
I MEAN... ISN'T IT THE SAME FOR YOU, ITSUKI-SAN...?
.....

...WAS TAKAMASA'S TITLE.....
WHEN I FIRST BECAME A CORPSE PRINCESS, WHAT I CLUNG TO...
SPLISH
SUPPORT .....HUH.
SCOOP
TAKAMASA'S MILITARY FAMILY WAS FAMOUS ENOUGH TO EARN THE "GENPAKU" TITLE FOR GENERATION AFTER GENERATION.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S A MONK.
YEP.
HIS .....
... TITLE ?
...TO KILL ENOUGH SHIKABANE TO GET TO HEAVEN. .....I TRULY BELIEVED THAT.....
IF I HADN'T..... WELL, I'M PRETTY WEAK, SO I NEVER WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE...
BUT I WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING TO MAKE A CONTRACT WITH A "GENPAKU."
...AND THERE WAS NOTHING TOO SPECIAL ABOUT MY MOVES.
I WAS NEVER REALLY A FIGHTER ...

IS IT..... OKAY FOR ME TO LAUGH AT THAT?
AHA HA.
HE WAS SUCH A DUMMY.
TAKAMASA AS A HIGH-SCHOOLER
BEGINNER'S SYMBOL
TAKAMASA WAS AN ORDINARY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WHEN WE FORMED OUR CONTRACT, AND HE'D ONLY JUST INHERITED THE GENPAKU TITLE.
BUT I WAS WORRIED FOR NOTHING.

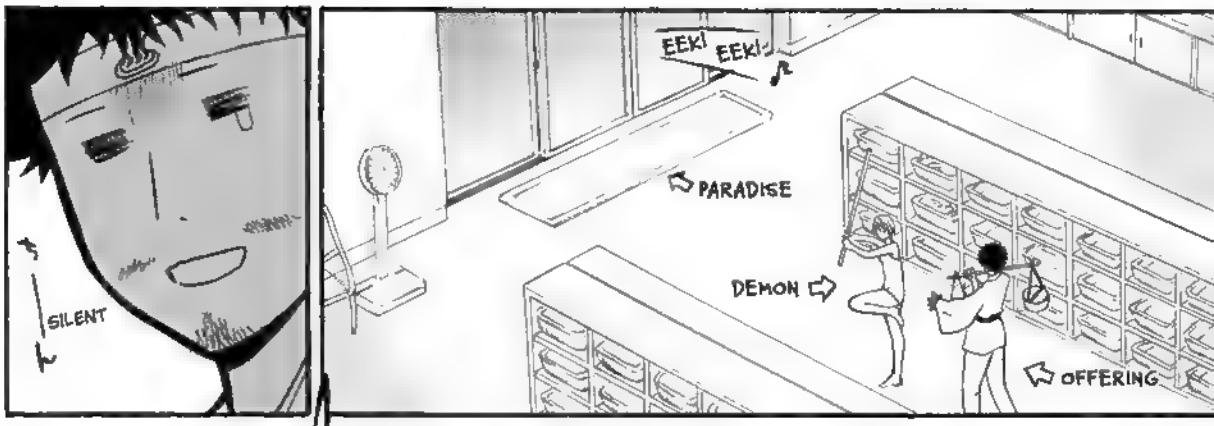
...LEFT SOME PRETTY BIG SCARS ON TAKAMASA .....
ALL OF THAT .....
...AND... I DIDN'T REALLY UNDER-STAND ANY-THING.
...BACK THEN..... I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT ANYONE BUT MYSELF .....
BUT REALLY .....

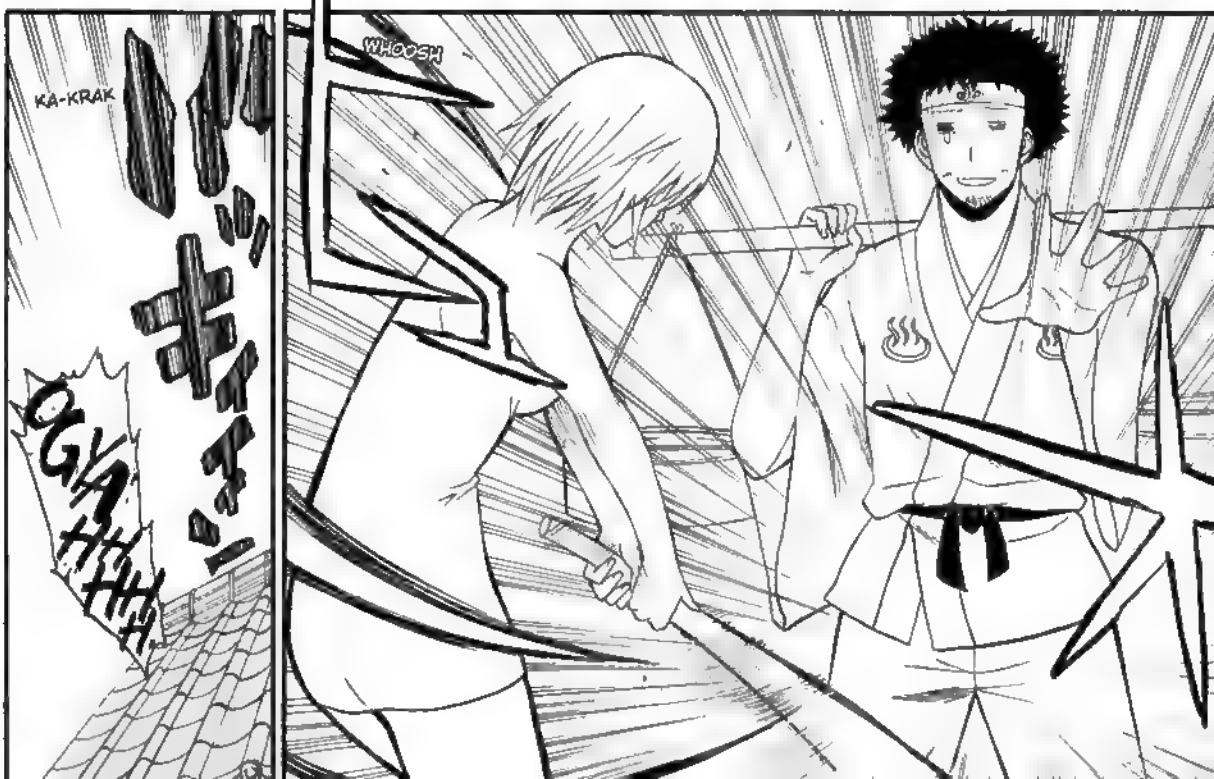

OUR BOND ACTUALLY BECAME THAT MUCH STRONGER..... EVEN IF THERE MIGHT'VE BEEN BETTER WAYS TO GO ABOUT IT.....
..... LOOKING BACK ...
I..... REALLY DID SOME BAD THINGS.

BUT ...
.....I GUESS ?
.....I MEAN, JUST LOOK AT US.
...THE BOND BETWEEN OUR! AND ME IS WEAK, HUH.....
..... SO YOU'RE SAYING ...

BLARGH
WHEN A CORPSE PRINCESS AND HER CONTRACTING MONK BOTH LOVED THE SAME PERSON, YOU'D THINK IT'D BE REALLY EASY FOR THEM TO HAVE A STRONG BOND.
SO CUTE.
RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, YOU'RE BOTH TOO STUBBORN TO GET ALONG .....
WH—
WHA .....
WHAAA ...
WHAT DID YOU SAY ...!?
NO. NO, NO, NO. KEISEI WAS A COMRADE IN ARMS. NOTHING MORE .....
EH?
BUT WHEN WE WERE UNDRESSING, I THOUGHT I SAW YOU PUTTING AWAY A PIECE OF KEISEI'S SUNGLASSES?
UHH ...
THAT WAS ..... YOU SEE...
GOOD DAY TO YOU!! I'M THE HOT SPRINGS VENDOR (MY GRAND PLAN) !!
AH
HA; HA!
BAM
YOU WANT SAKE? MILK? HOT SPRINGS BUNS? HOT SPRINGS EGGS? I'VE GOT IT ALL. (GOTTA BE TWENTY OR OLDER FOR SAKE.)

CLENCH
SMILE
WIND UP
ゆら


SILENT
EEK! EEK!
PARADISE
DEMON
OFFERING

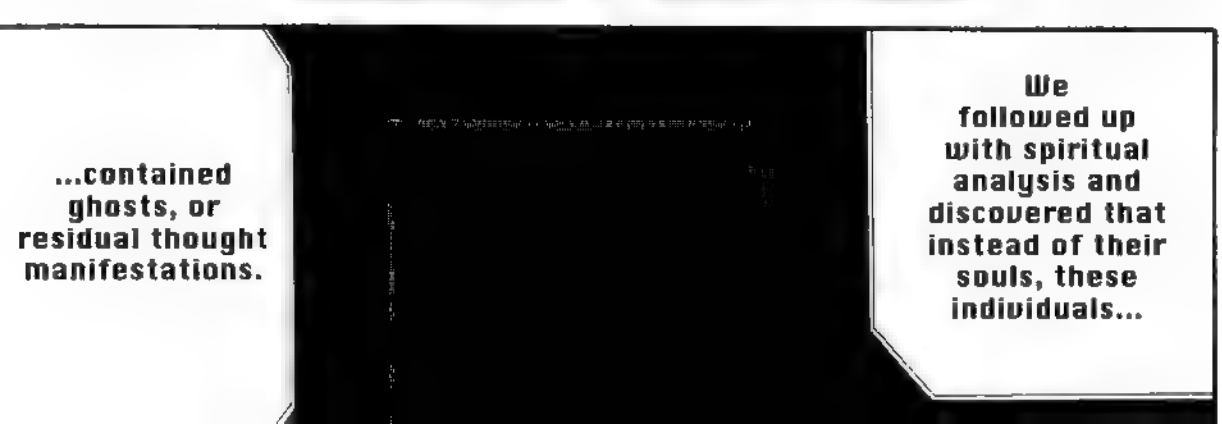

KA-KRAK
WHOOSH
OGYAHHHH

DON'T PAY IT ANY MIND. I'M SURE IT WAS JUST SAWAMIYA-SAN GIVING SENSEI HIS JUST DESSERTS FOR TRYING TO SNEAK INTO THE GIRLS' SIDE.
I GUESS ...
..... ANYHOW ...
..... TAKA-MASA-SAN.
THAT SOUNDED... LIKE AN ANIMAL JUST DIED .....

I was there myself, and there's no mistake.
Yes.

SHI-RAE .....
IS IT REALLY TRUE?

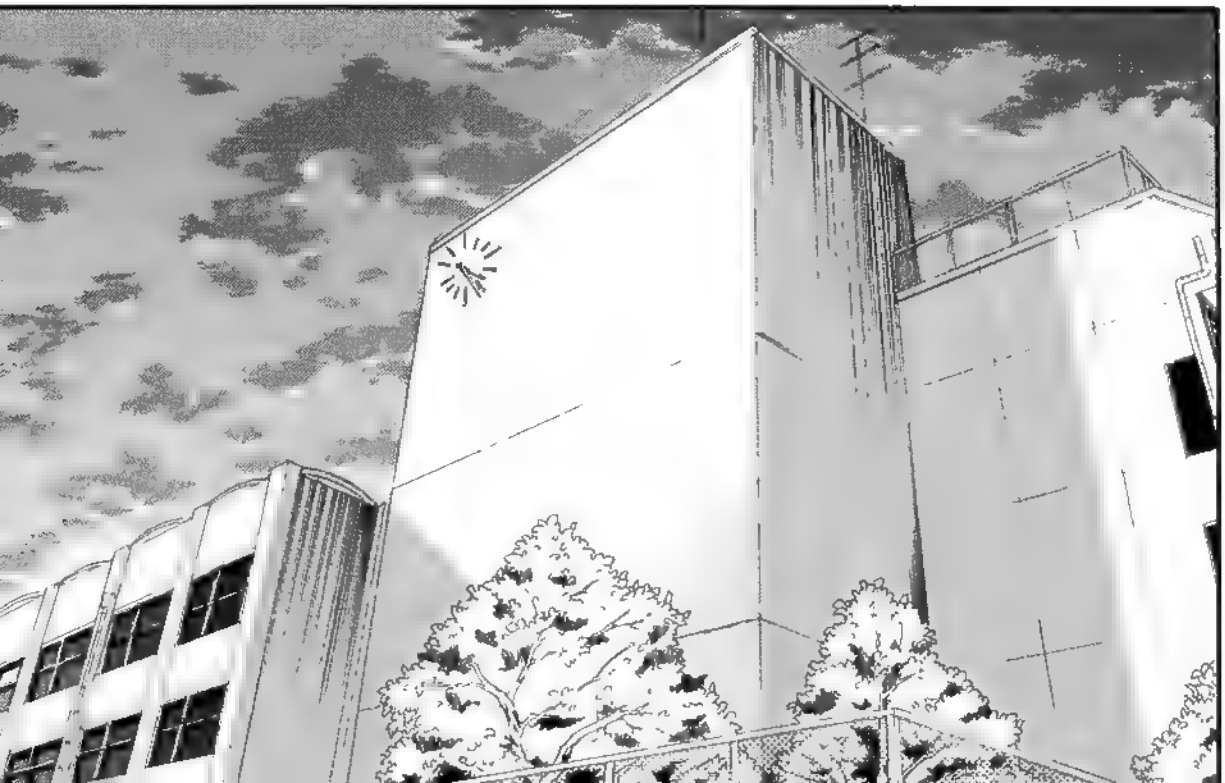
What's more, through police interrogation, it became clear that 98% of them lost their memories from before they went missing. Their personalities had changed as well.
They called them-selves "human-oids."
Among the murderers and thieves arrested in Ikai and Yanatsu Cities in the past four days, 70% of them were missing persons from other prefectures.


...contained ghosts, or residual thought manifestations.
We followed up with spiritual analysis and discovered that instead of their souls, these individuals...

.....
TAKA-MASA-SAN.
.....
GOT IT. KEEP ON HIGH ALERT FOR NOW.
WE'LL AID WITH THE INVESTIGATION ONCE WE RETURN.
Under-stood.
BEEP
LOOKS LIKE HQ'S WORST FEARS ARE CONFIRMED.
TAP
THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S NEXT GOAL...
... IS TO DEFILE YAMA CITY IN PREPARA-TION FOR THEIR INVASION.
AS A PRELIMINARY STEP, THEY'RE INCITING FEAR AND UNEASE IN THE PEOPLE OF IKAI AND YANATSU.
.....!
IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT YOU'D PANIC AND WORRY WHEN YOUR HOMETOWN AND FRIENDS ARE IN DANGER, BUT IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS THAT YOU ACTUALLY NEED TO REMAIN LEVEL-HEADED.
IF NOT ...
... YOU'LL FALL RIGHT INTO THE ENEMY'S TRAP.
I KNOW.
OH NO ... IF THAT'S THE CASE, WE'D BETTER .....!

I'LL PROTECT EVERYONE.
THAT'S WHY I PICKED UP WHERE BIG BRO LEFT OFF.....
STEP
RIGHT... STAY CALM...
OKAY!
FIRST IS THE STRATEGY MEETING TOMOR-ROW...
...BUT ONCE WE RETURN, WE'LL TAKE ACTION.

...I STILL..... HAVE TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND HOSHIMURA-SAN.....!!
SO EVEN IF I HAVEN'T REALLY INTERNALIZED WHAT TAKAMASA-SAN SAID YET.....

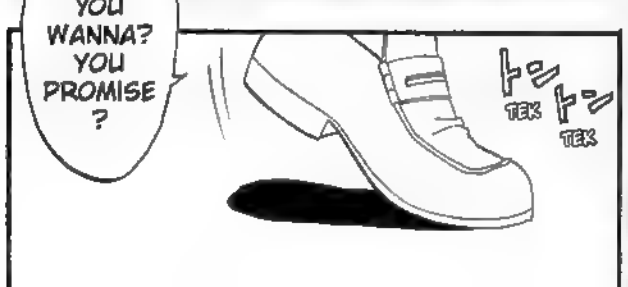


生徒会室
STUDENT COUNCIL ROOM

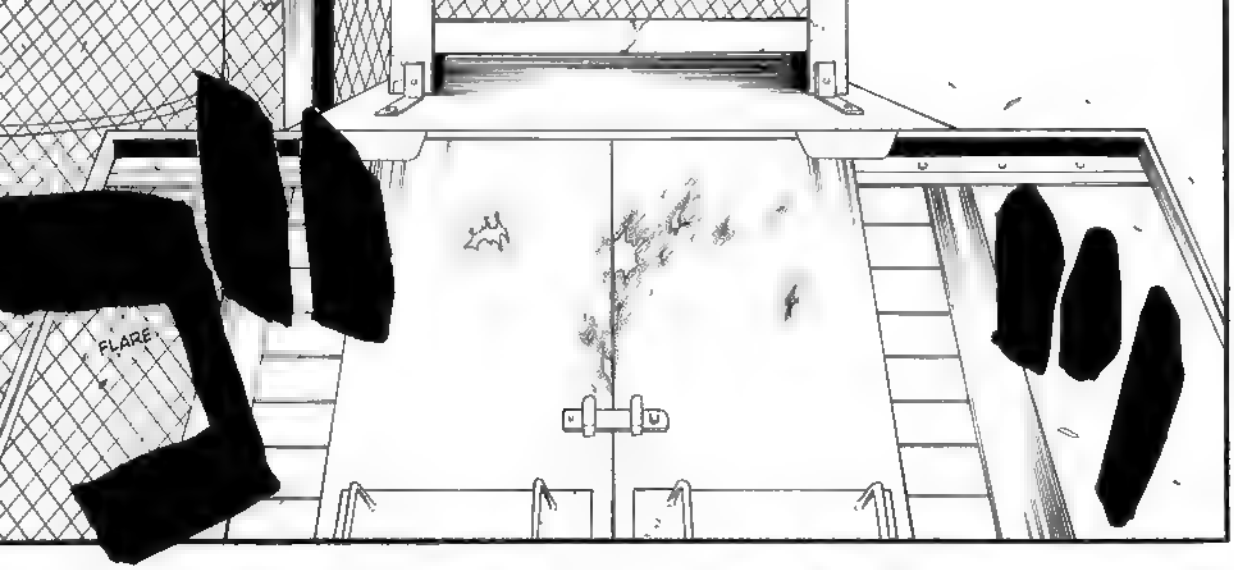
Citizens are advised to be on guard and remain indoors as much as possible.
In other news ...
I'LL BE SURE TO LOCK UP HERE... IT'LL BE FINE.

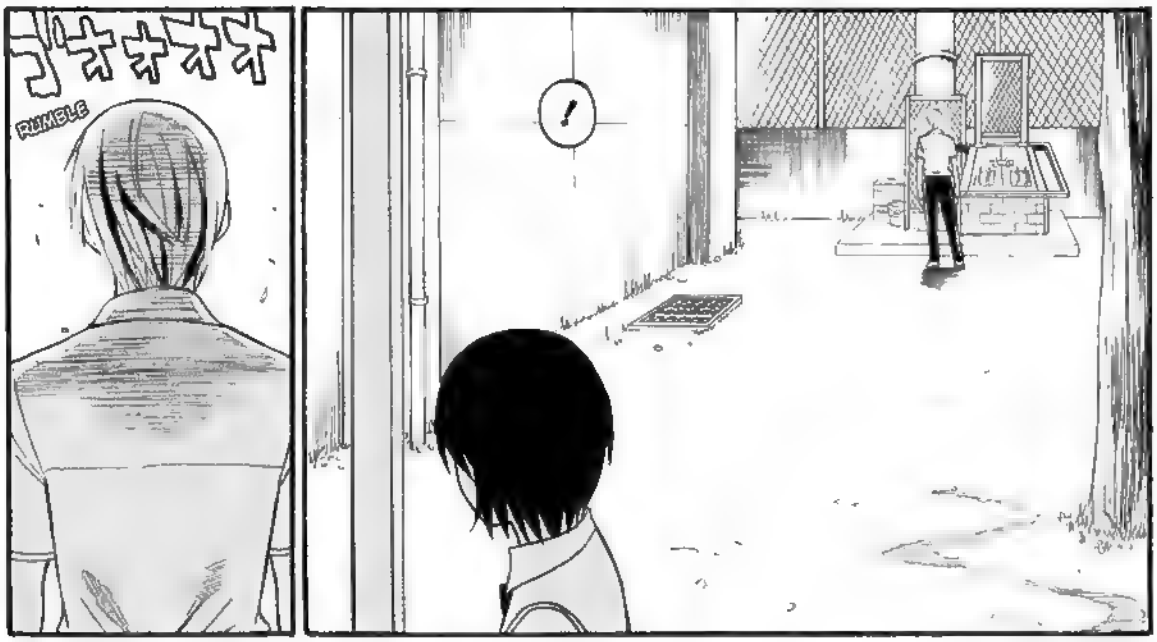
The sudden, recent outbreak of incidents in Ikai City and Yanatsu City continues.
Nothing connects the suspects, and many seem to have amnesia.
Even the police are at loss over the situation.
YEAH.
OKAY..... GOT IT, INUHIKO.

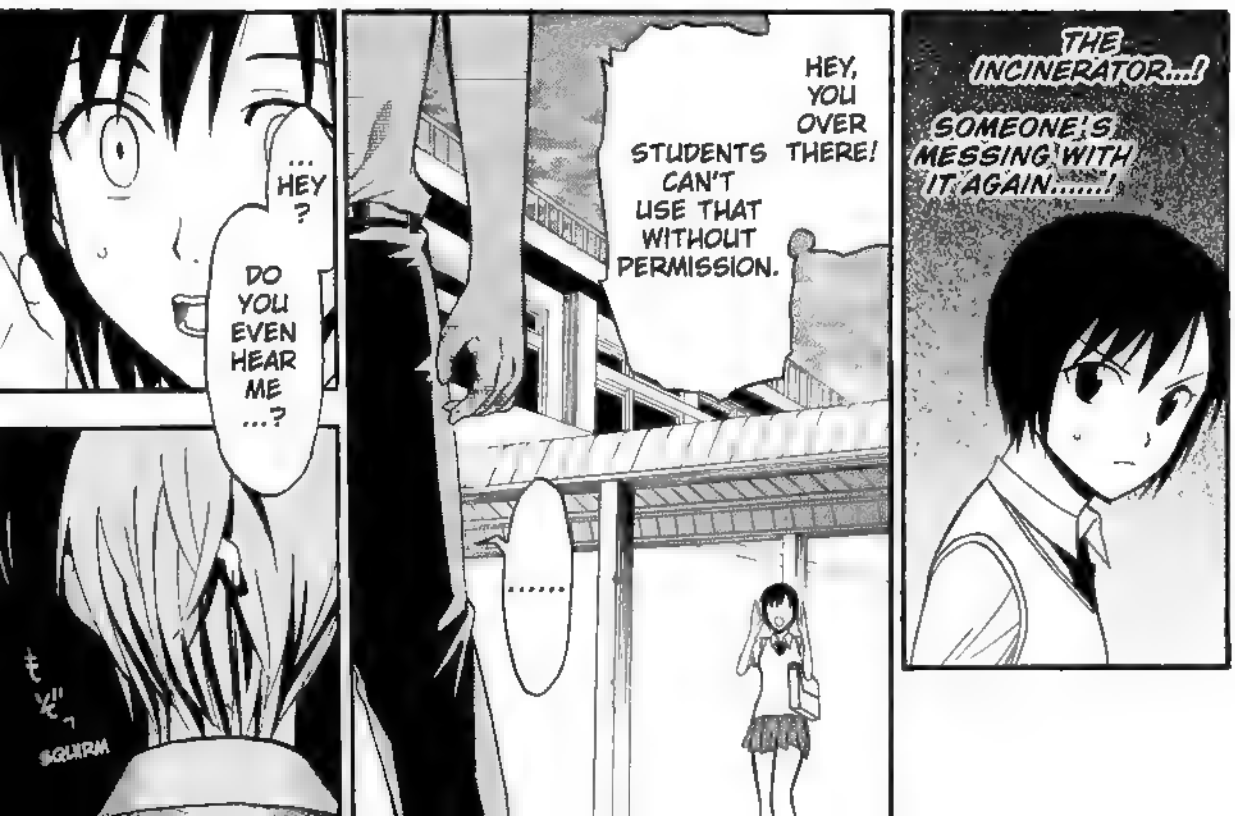
THINK OF IT AS A REWARD FOR US ON STUDENT COUNCIL, COMING INTO SCHOOL EVERY DAY AND ALL.


..... REALLY, YOU WANNA? YOU PROMISE ?
トン トン
TEK TEK

ANYWAY, WANNA GO TO KARAOKE LATER?
SIP
...COME ON, WHY NOT? ONLY TEN DAYS OF SUMMER VACATION LEFT.


FLARE


RUMBLE
!


THE INCINERATOR...!
SOMEONE'S MESSING WITH IT AGAIN.....!
HEY, YOU OVER THERE! STUDENTS CAN'T USE THAT WITHOUT PERMISSION.
.....
... HEY ? DO YOU EVEN HEAR ME ...?
SQUIRM

SQUIRM
!?
EEK ...!?

JUST NOW, THAT .....
.....
.....BUT...
AM I SEEING THINGS ...!?
WHAT ...?
HUH .....?
..... EH.

BANG
BANG
.....A NOISE?
!
...
BANG
BANG
BANG
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
BANG
!?
BURST
BANG
A DOG !?
TOWN!!

APPEAR
EEK...
DON'T PANIC.
IF YOU SCREAM, I'LL...
...!
...BURN YOU TOO.
EEK.....
TWITCH
ROLL
EEK.
AHH.
ROLL

REACH
JUST STAND THERE AND DON'T CRY OUT LIKE AN IDIOT.
SO IF YOU WANNA KEEP YOUR SKIN ON.....
O-
OKAY.
TREMBLE
EEK.
TREMBLE
TWITCH
TWITCH

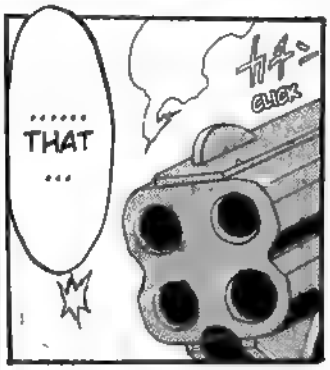
PRETTY SURE THAT WAS THE JANITOR'S SHITTY MUTT.
WHEN I WAS ALIVE, THAT THING WOULD ALWAYS YAP YAP YAP AT ME. FUCKING ANNOYING.
SHUDDER
HYE HA HA HA HA AH.
I MADE A PRETTY NICE ROAST, HUH?
THAT'S A GOOD LOOK FOR HIM.
STEAM
STEAM
SIZZLE

TWINGE
...MAKES ME FEEL ALL WARM AND FUZZY INSIDE.
SO BURNING HIM TO A CRISP...
CRACK

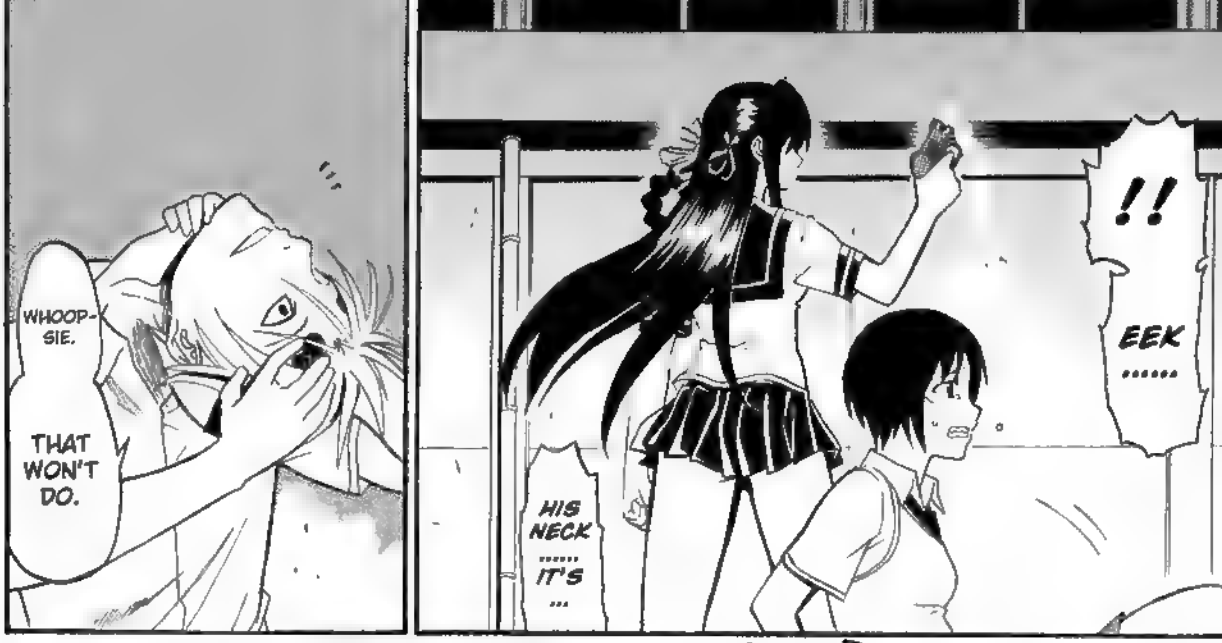
THAT'S JUST ...
...AND KILL WHEN I WANT TO!!
I TAKE WHEN I WANT TO.....
EEK
THAT'S WHY..... I'M NOT HOLDING BACK ANYMORE. NO SIR. NOT HERE.
RIP
I'M NOT GOOD AT HOLDING BACK, Y'SEE.
TUG
ALL THAT DOES IS PRODUCE REGRETS.

BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
THUD
WHAM

YOU DO REALIZE THAT'S JUST A MANIFESTATION OF YOUR ROTTEN CORE, RIGHT?
THAT ARRO-GANCE ...


.....
THAT ...
CLICK

A REAL GUN.....!?
BUT... WHY.....
.....
AND...
EEK .....
A PISTOL .....!?
.....
AND...!?
HYA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
SPLURT
.....
HAH.
SLINK
HEH HEH..... SO THE HELL WHAT?
THIS IS WHAT I WANTED, AND NOW I GOT IT. YOU GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? HUH!?
WOBBLE
SCRAPE
ARRO-GANCE, WAS IT?

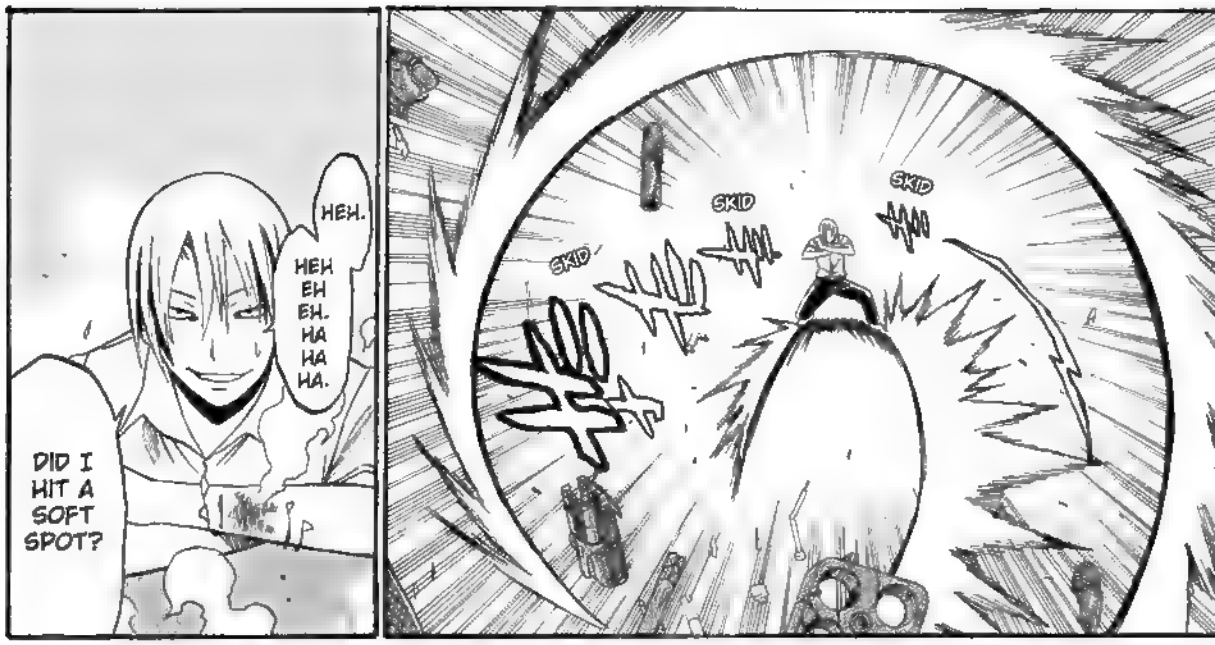

!!
EEK .....
HIS NECK ..... IT'S ...
WHOOP-SIE.
THAT WON'T DO.

SO YOU'RE..... ONE OF THESE "HUMAN-OIDS."
A CORPSE POSSESSED BY A GHOST.
THE UNCLEAN BUNCH'S NEXT PLAY .....
CRACK
CRACK
POP
CRACK
CRACK

YUP.
WOBBLE
THAT MAKES YOU MAKINA HOSHI-MURA?

OH, I KNOW YOU. .....ALL SORTS OF THINGS ...
... ABOUT YOU.
LIKE HOW YOU GOT THAT MONK KILLED.
!

HEE.
HYA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
WE GHOSTS ARE ANYWHERE AND EVERY-WHERE.
WE SAW IT ALL GO DOWN.
WE WERE THERE WHEN THAT DUDE BIT THE DUST.
..... AND Y'KNOW, BACK THEN, I WAS THINKING ...
...MAYBE... IT WAS A GOOD THING HE DIED?
NO?
!!
POW


HEH.
HEH EH EH. HA HA HA.
DID I HIT A SOFT SPOT?
SKID
SKID
SKID

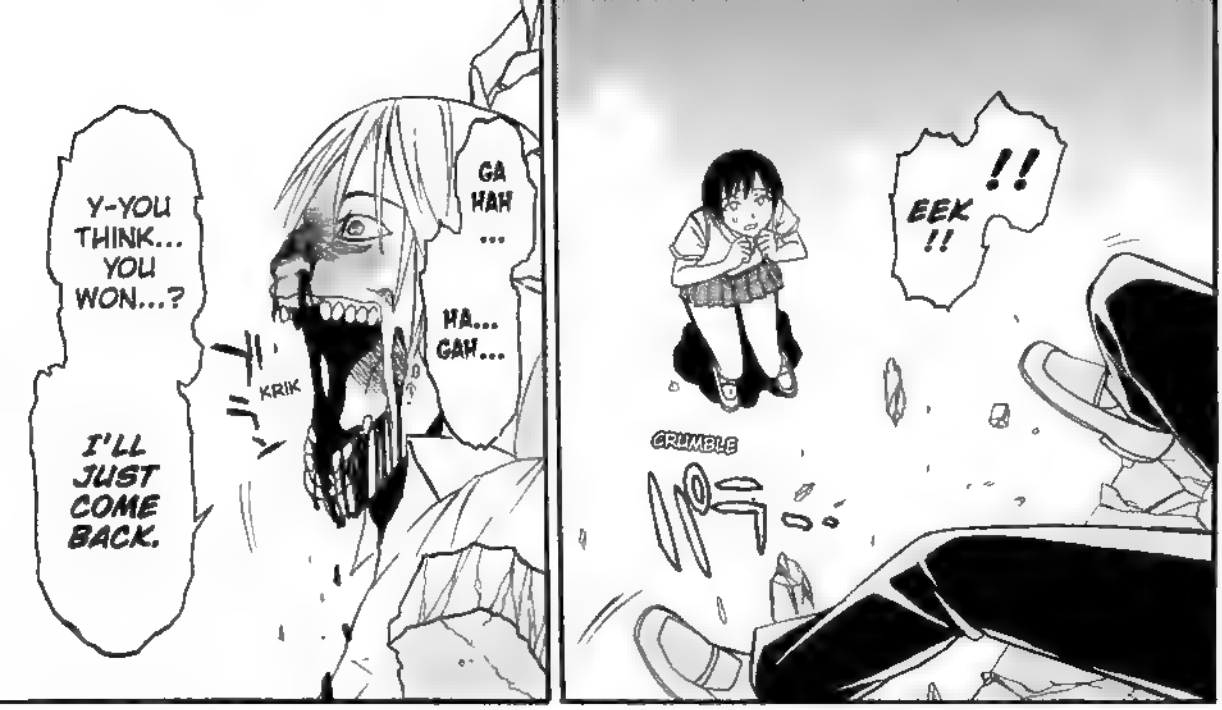
I MEAN..... YOU'RE SO MUCH STRONGER THAN BACK THEN. BARELY RECOGNIZ-ABLE.
PROBABLY STRONG ENOUGH TO GET YOUR PRECIOUS REVENGE!
THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU WANT!!

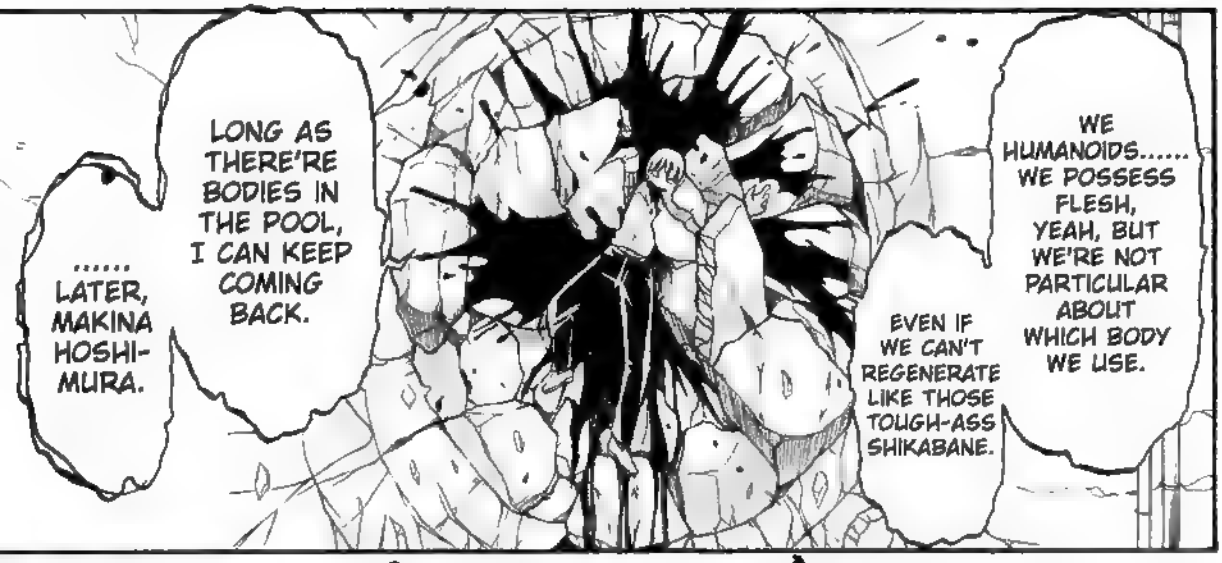
.....
OOZE
SHUT UP...

WHOOOOSH
SHUT UP!!!

KEH ...
KE-HA-HA-HA-HA. ..... HEY, HEY.
.....!
IS THIS .....
...A CURSE .....?
WHICH OF US IS ROTTEN NOW?
..... HUH?
!!
CRACK
CRACK
BASH
SNAP
POP
RIP
SNAP
PON
ZUM
ZUM
ZUM...
SO FAST.....
GAHH !!
SPLORT

KAPOW
WHUD


EEK !!
!!
CRUMBLE
GA HAH ...
HA... GAH...
KRIK
Y-YOU THINK... YOU WON...?
I'LL JUST COME BACK.


WE HUMANOIDS..... WE POSSESS FLESH, YEAH, BUT WE'RE NOT PARTICULAR ABOUT WHICH BODY WE USE.
EVEN IF WE CAN'T REGENERATE LIKE THOSE TOUGH-ASS SHIKABANE.
LONG AS THERE'RE BODIES IN THE POOL, I CAN KEEP COMING BACK.
..... LATER, MAKINA HOSHI-MURA.

JUST REMEMBER ...
...WHAT I SAID.
SWELL
.....!?
RIP

BONK
WHAK
SPLASH
BURST
KYAHHH !!
HAA.
HAA.
SHIELD
HAA .....
FSSHH

.....WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT, HOSHIMURA-SAN?
..... WHAT?
HAA.
HAA .....
THAT CURSE OF HERS JUST HAPPENED TO BE MY BEST CHANCE TO SEE IT.
WERE YOU..... JUST GONNA LET THOSE BITS OF SKULL HIT THE GIRL?
YOU COULD'VE STOPPED IT, YEAH?
JUST NOW..... THAT FINAL EXPLOSION.
AN ABER-RATION.
... DIDN'T NOTICE.
..... RIGHT.
I...
AT THAT MOMENT.....I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT SHE WAS.....
.....
OH.

SOMETHING FAR DIFFERENT THAN WHAT I'D IMAGINED UP UNTIL THEN .....
AND..... THAT ABERRA-TION...
THAT WAS THE TRUE NATURE OF MAKINA HOSHIMURA, LURKING INSIDE OF HER.

DEATH 28:
THE DEAD DON'T SMILE (PART 1)

.....
ONE MORE TIME.
I'VE GOTTA CREATE MYSELF AGAIN NOW!!
RIP
SQUEEZE
AHHHHH!
SHIT !!
GRASP

.....SO UNSEEMLY.
CRACK
POP
SLICE
SNAP
AHHH .....
GEHH... GUH.
CRACK

WRENCH
.....
.....YOU SAW ALL THAT?
ENA..... SAN.
COMING BACK? AFTER LOSING SO BADLY?

GIGGLE
ﾌﾌﾌﾌ
SO YES, I SAW IT ALL.
INCLUDING WHEN SHE MADE A BLOODY MESS OF YOU! ♡
SURE.
YOU HUMANOIDS ARE MY WORKS OF ART.
I'M ALWAYS CHECKING UP ON YOU.
.....
TCH.

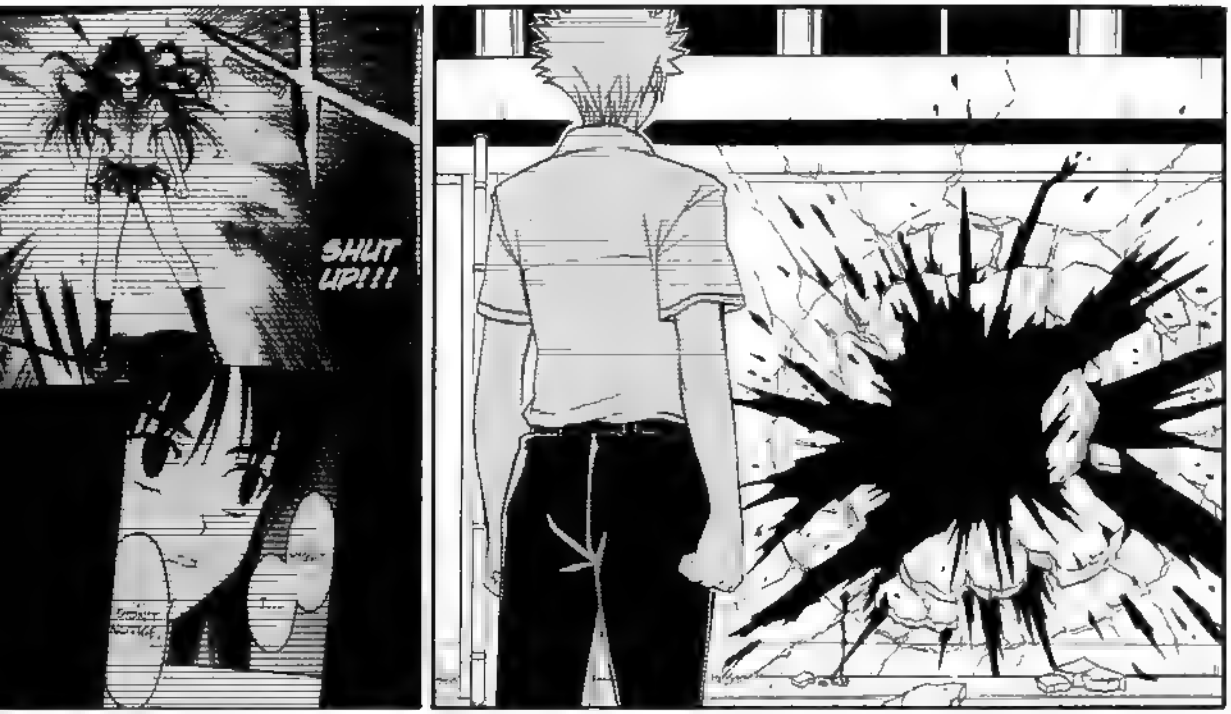
I'LL LET YOU PLAY WITH HER AGAIN.
AW, DON'T LOOK SO DOWN.
.....

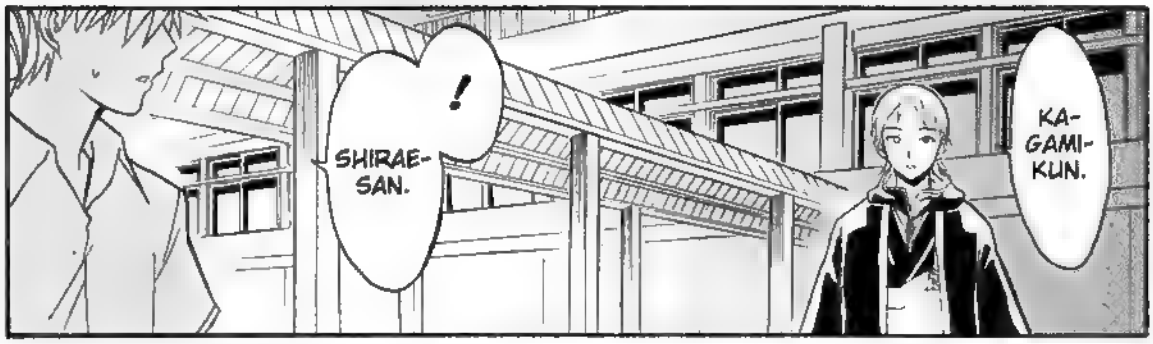
ALSO ...
YOUR LITTLE CONVERSATION REVEALED HER SOFT SPOTS.
FU FU.
BELIEVE ME, I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN MY CREATIONS ARE MISTREATED EITHER.
!

THE GIRL'S OWN CURSE ...

HER OWN FEELINGS WILL CRUSH HER HEART.

DEATH 28: THE DEAD DON'T SMILE (PART 1)


SHUT UP!!!

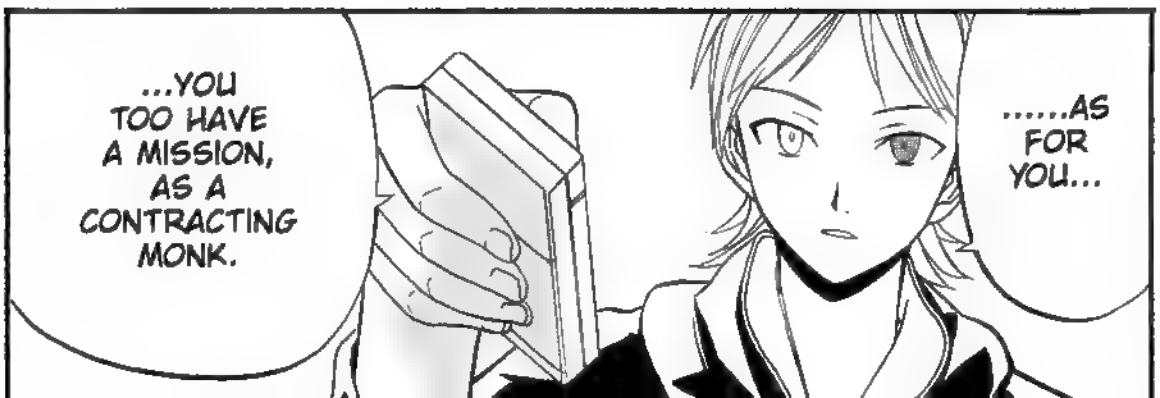

!
SHIRAE-SAN.
KA-GAMI-KUN.

.....OH. ..... REALLY?
THANK YOU.
SHE'LL BE SENT HOME AFTER A BRIEF EXAM.
THE GIRL WAS FINE.

MAKINA HOSHI-MURA'S CURSE .....
... WAS IT?
.....

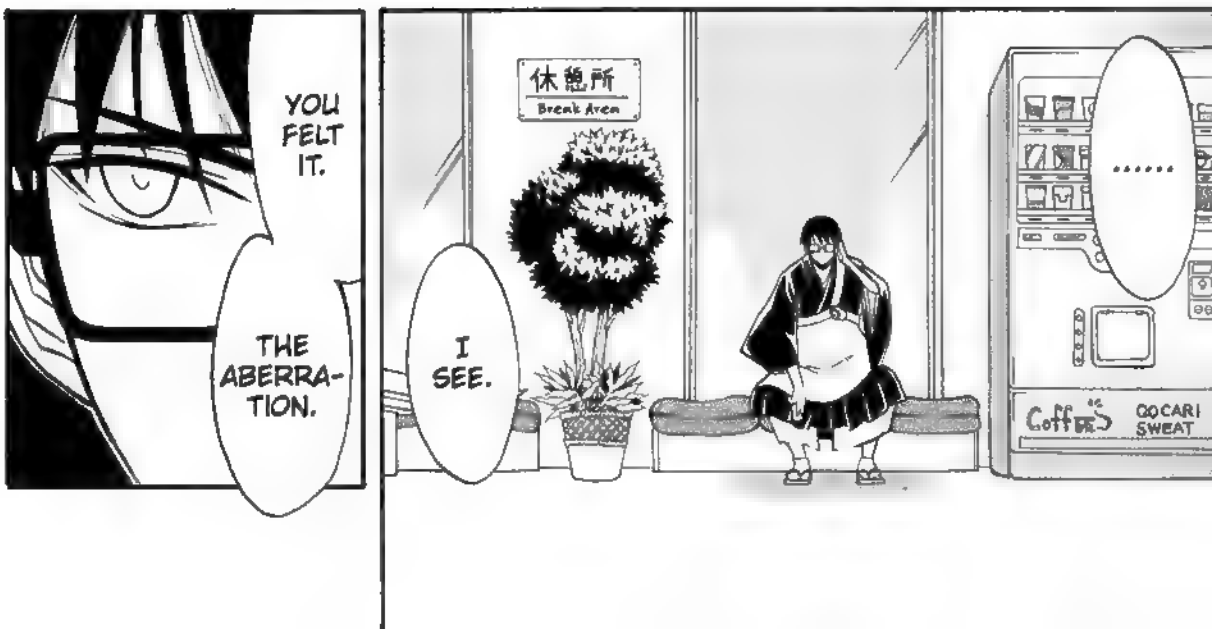
NATURALLY, WE'VE ALSO CONFIRMED ITS EXISTENCE.
HOW-EVER ...
...AT THE MOMENT, WE CAN'T REMOVE HER FROM BATTLE.

RUSTLE
WE'LL HAVE HER FULFILL HER DUTIES AS A CORPSE PRINCESS.


.....AS FOR YOU...
...YOU TOO HAVE A MISSION, AS A CONTRACTING MONK.

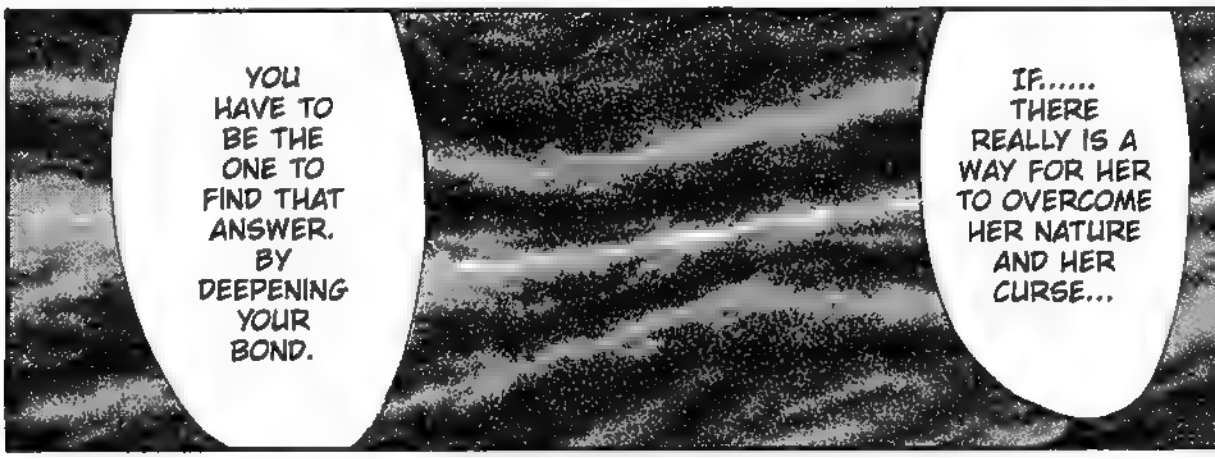
.....
OKAY.
FIRST, REPORT BACK TO YOUR PROTECTOR.
BROTHER.
BEEP
RING
BEEP
BEEP
BRRRRING
BEEP
BEEP
TRILL
RING
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

休憩所
Break Area



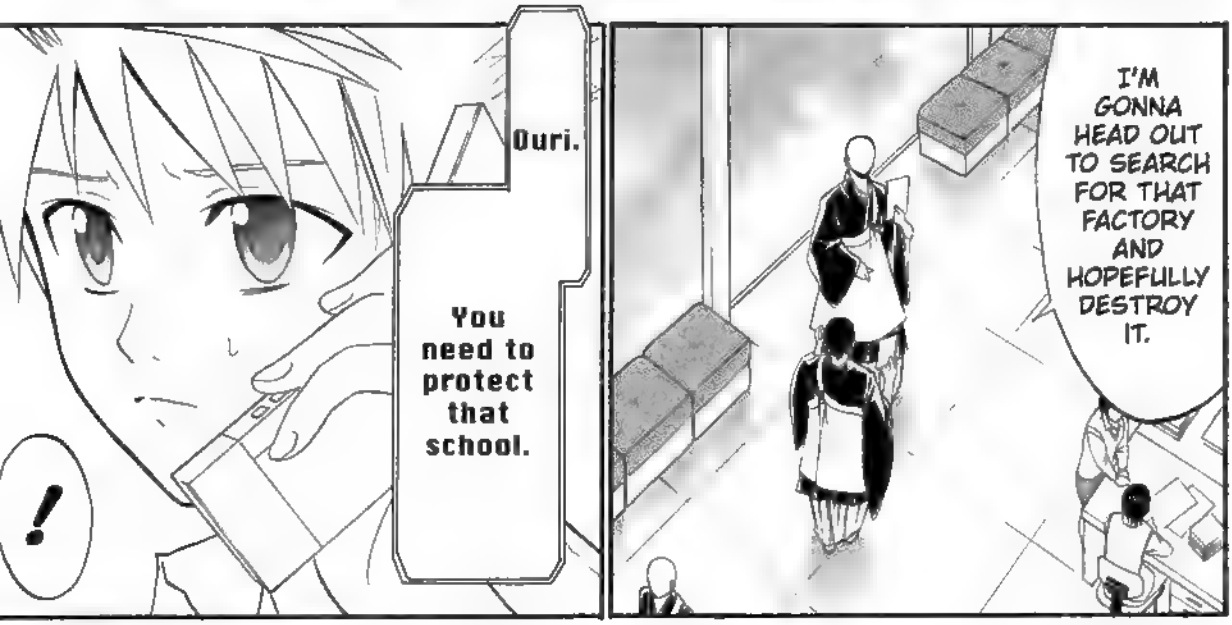
I DEFINITELY NOTICED SOMETHING IN HOSHIMURA-SAN THAT I HADN'T FELT BEFORE .....
"ABERRATION"..... DEFINITELY.....
.....
.....
YES.
.....
BUT..... THAT WAS...
.....
OURI.
RIGHT NOW..... AS FAR AS ADVICE GOES.....
...I WON'T SAY ANY-THING.
IN TRUTH ...
...THERE'S PROBABLY A LOT I COULD TELL YOU, BASED ON MY OWN EXPERIENCES.
LIFT
BUT..... I DOUBT ...
...THAT WOULD REALLY BE MUCH USE TO YOU.

EVEN THOUGH ...
...I WAS ABLE TO ACCEPT THAT CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE ESSENTIALLY ABERRATIONS ...
...THAT DIDN'T MEAN I COULD DO ANYTHING TO CHANGE IT.
.....


IF..... THERE REALLY IS A WAY FOR HER TO OVERCOME HER NATURE AND HER CURSE...
YOU HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO FIND THAT ANSWER. BY DEEPENING YOUR BOND.

HOLD ON. SORRY.
I'M SHORT ON TIME HERE, SO LET'S GET YOU CAUGHT UP ON THE DETAILS OF THE JOB.
Eh? Ah..... Okay!
PRO-TEC-TOR ...
IT HAS TO BE ME .....
.....!
.....

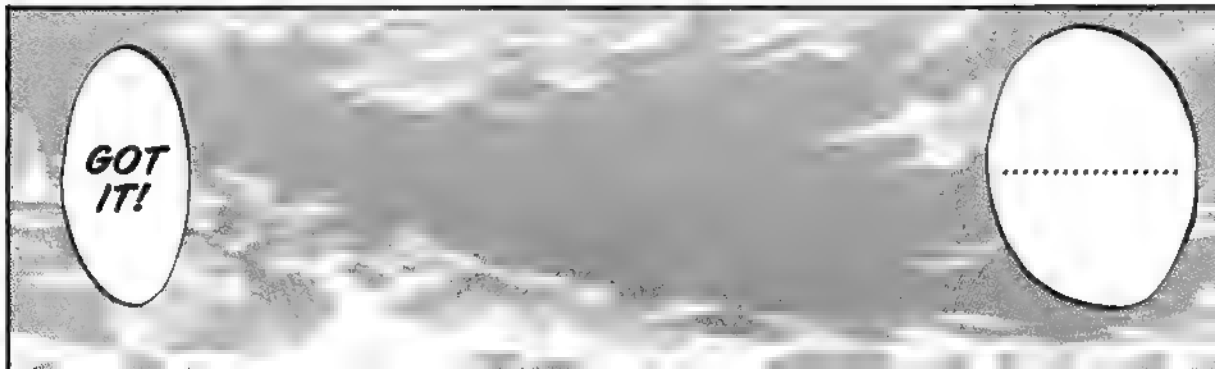
FIRST, WE'VE GOTTA DEAL WITH THOSE HUMANOIDS.
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE ONE AT YOUR SCHOOL, THEIR NUMBERS SEEM BE INCREASING.
THEY'RE MOST LIKELY BEING *MANUFACTURED* SOMEWHERE.

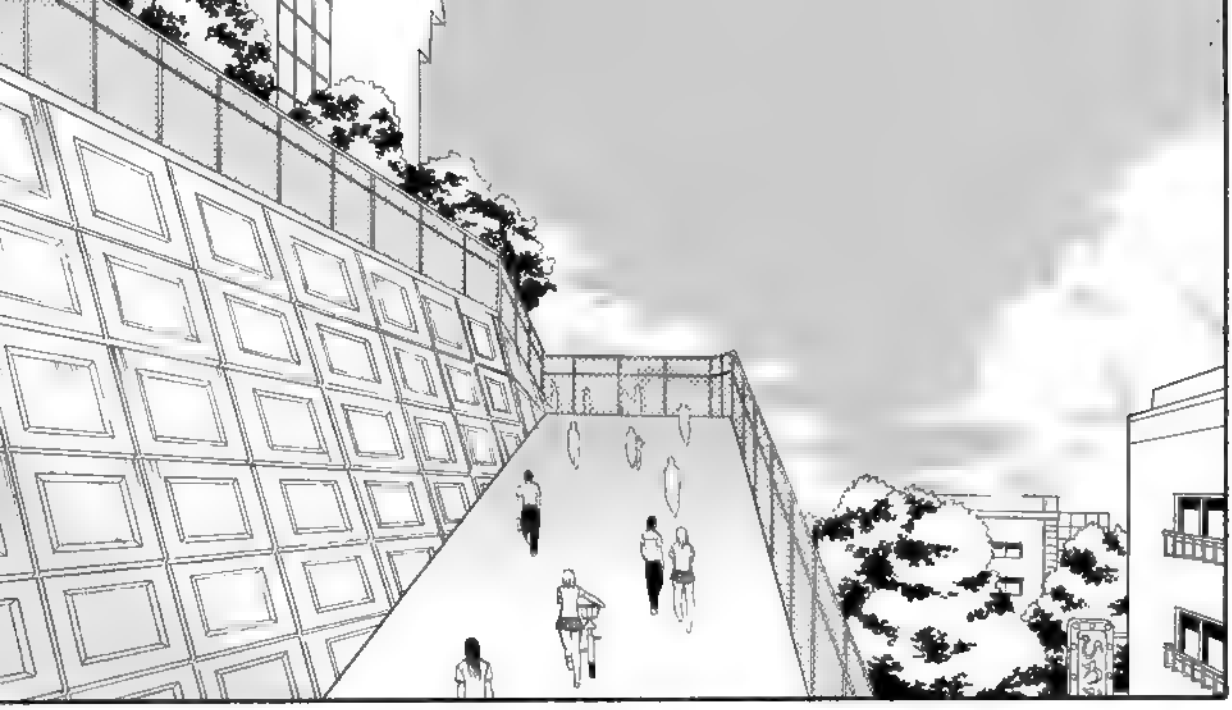

I'M GONNA HEAD OUT TO SEARCH FOR THAT FACTORY AND HOPEFULLY DESTROY IT.
Ouri.
You need to protect that school.
!

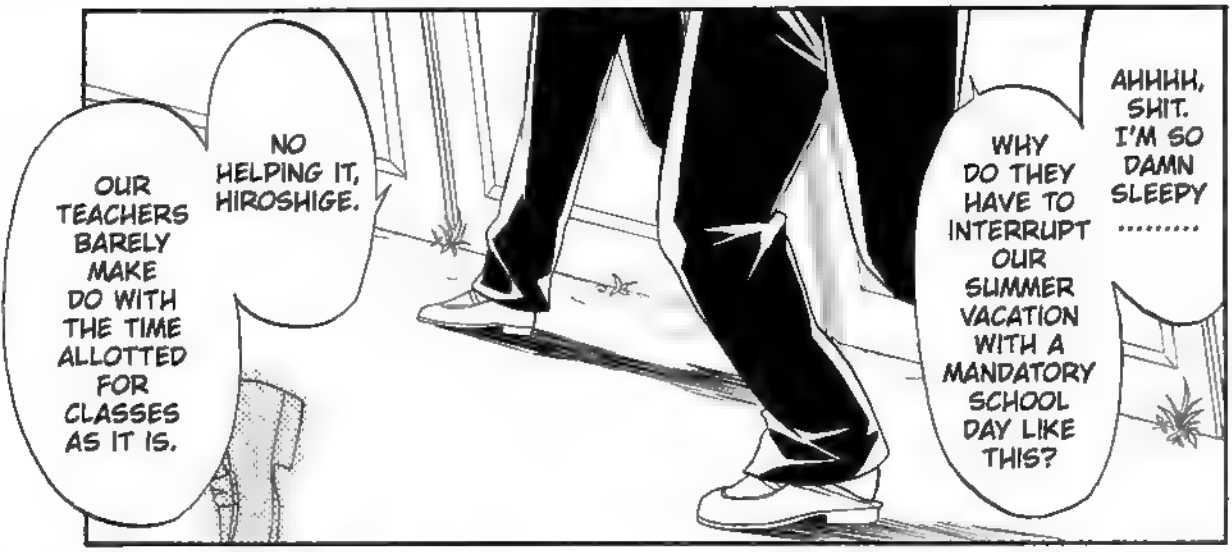
YOU DIDN'T GET THE FULL MONTH ...
...BUT YOUR WEEKS OF TRAINING AT MT. GORYOU SHOULD'VE STRENGTHENED YOUR BODY AND MIND.
YOU CAN PERCEIVE BONDS, NOW.
SO YOU CAN FIGHT WITH YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS.
..... OURI.

THIS IS YOUR FIRST MISSION AS A KOUGEN SECT MONK.
YOU NEED TO FIGHT. PROTECT WHAT YOU HOLD DEAR. YOUR WORLD.

YOU CAN'T LET YOUR PERSONAL DOUBTS AND WORRIES HOLD YOU BACK.
BECAUSE WE OF THE KOUGON SECT...
...HAVE OUR POWER AND OUR DUTIES.


.....
GOT IT!

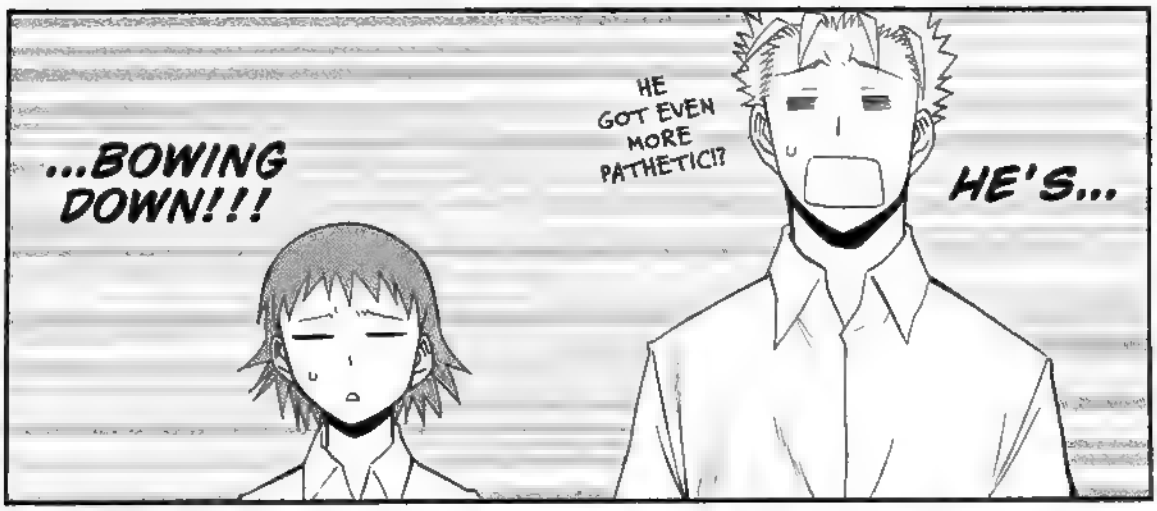



AHHHH, SHIT. I'M SO DAMN SLEEPY .....
WHY DO THEY HAVE TO INTERRUPT OUR SUMMER VACATION WITH A MANDATORY SCHOOL DAY LIKE THIS?
NO HELPING IT, HIROSHIGE.
OUR TEACHERS BARELY MAKE DO WITH THE TIME ALLOTTED FOR CLASSES AS IT IS.

HE MUST BE DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, 'COS I COULDN'T REACH HIM BY CELL. SO I CAN'T BE SURE, BUT...
...I BET OURI'S DOING ALL RIGHT.

SLIDE
HEH. YEAH, I GUESS I'M A LITTLE EXCITED TO SEE HOW MUCH HE'S GROWN OR WHATEVER.

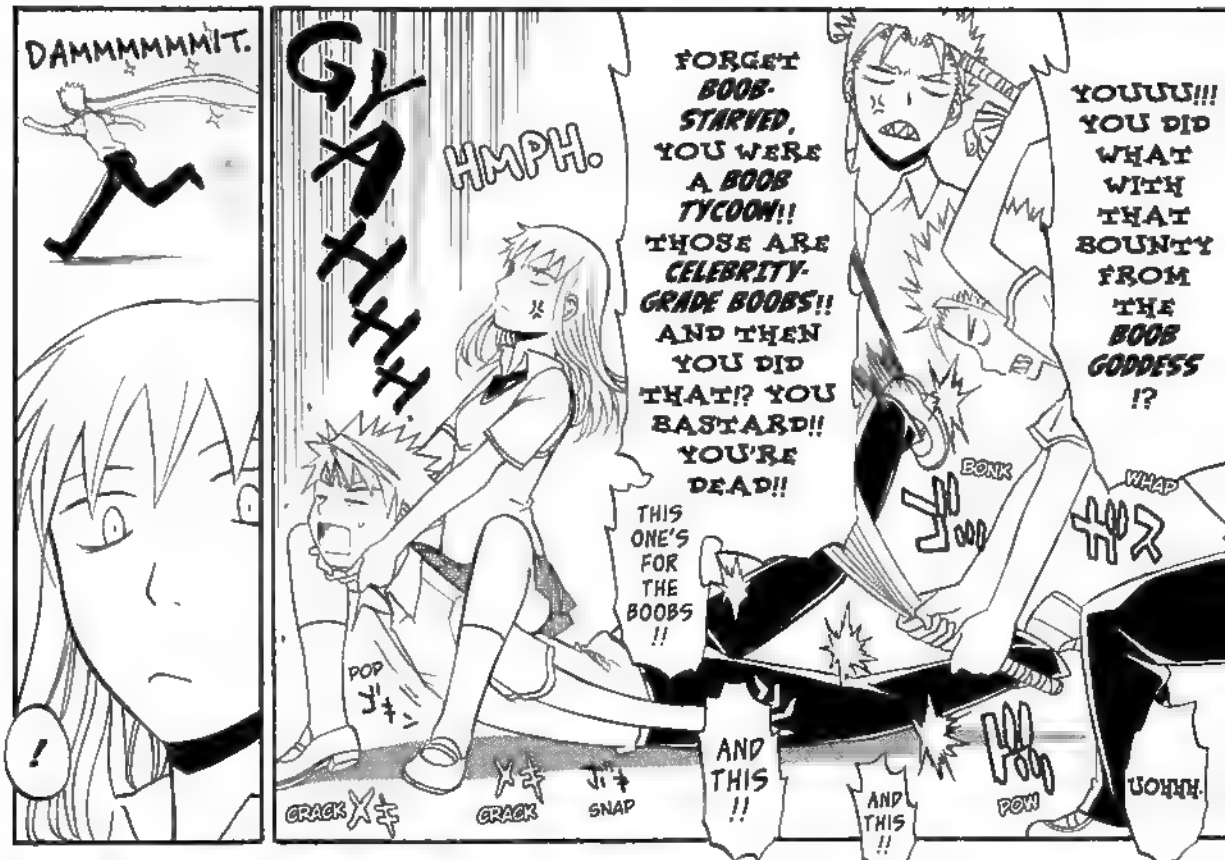
YEAH, YEAH.
I JUST CAN'T HELP BUT PICTURE OURI, OFF TRAINING AND HAVING FUN.
AND HE'S WITH THAT RAVEN-HAIRED CUTIE.


...BOWING DOWN!!!
HE GOT EVEN MORE PATHETIC!?
HE'S...

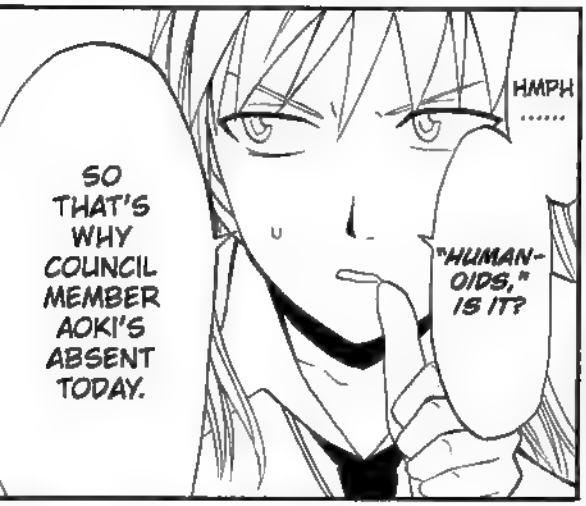
UH..... UMM, MIZUKI-CHAN.
CAN'T YOU..... FORGIVE HIM.....?
.....
FLOWE
FRET
FRET
お
3
お
3

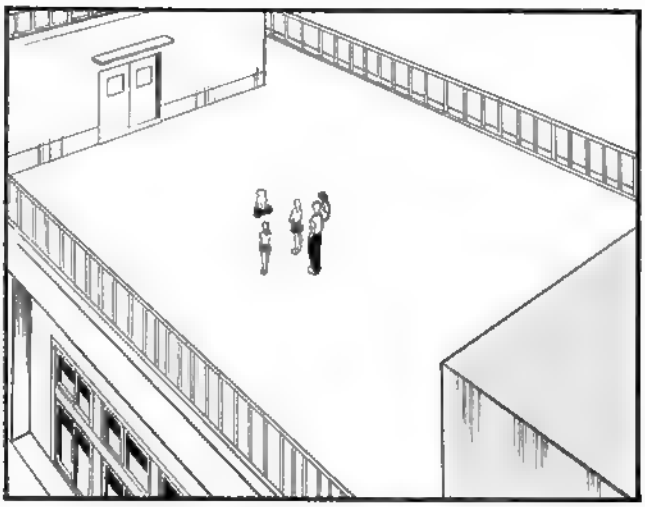
NO...
...WAY!!
GLARE
.....
AHH.....
UM, INUHIKO-SAN. WHAT'S GOING ON?
WELCOME BACK, OURI.
GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE OKAY.
AH.
YEAH... HEY THERE, USHIJIMA. SUMITORI.
HOLD ON, OURI!! WHADDYA MEAN YOU JUST QUIT IN THE MIDDLE!?
EEEK!! I SAID I'M SORRY !!
GRRRR !!
OF ALL THE ...
YOU MAKE US CHOKE BACK THE TEARS AT THAT BIG, STUPID SENDOFF, AND FOR WHAT?
GRUMP
NOW YOU CUT IT SHORT AND STROLL BACK HERE LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED .....

TWINGE
POINT
AND WHAT ABOUT THE BENTO BOX KASUGA MADE YOU!?
YOU BARELY EAT IT AND THEN GIVE HALF OF IT AWAY? WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA!??
.....
IT'S OKAY...

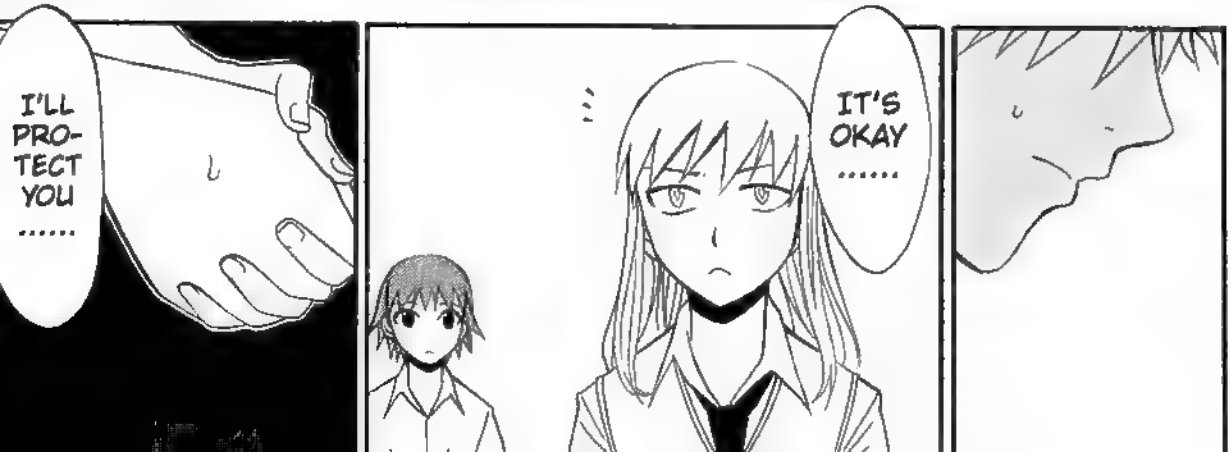

DAMMMMMMIT.
!
GYAHHH
HMPH.
FORGET BOOB-STARVED, YOU WERE A BOOB TYCOON!! THOSE ARE CELEBRITY-GRADE BOOBS!! AND THEN YOU DID THAT!? YOU BASTARD!! YOU'RE DEAD!!
YOUUU!!! YOU DID WHAT WITH THAT BOUNTY FROM THE BOOB GODDESS !?
THIS ONE'S FOR THE BOOBS !!
POP
CRACK
CRACK
SNAP
BONK
WHAP
AND THIS !!
AND THIS !!
POW
UOHHH.

AH.
IT'S OVER.
SLUMP
BUT FROM THAT NIGHT ON, THEY FORCED ME LIVE ON THESE WEIRD ROOTS AND TWIGS. SO INSTEAD OF LETTING IT GO TO WASTE, I.....
...GAVE IT TO UMEHARA-SENSEI...
TH-THAT'S NOT IT..... I WAS GONNA EAT IT LATER, I SWEAR.....
CRACK
CRACK

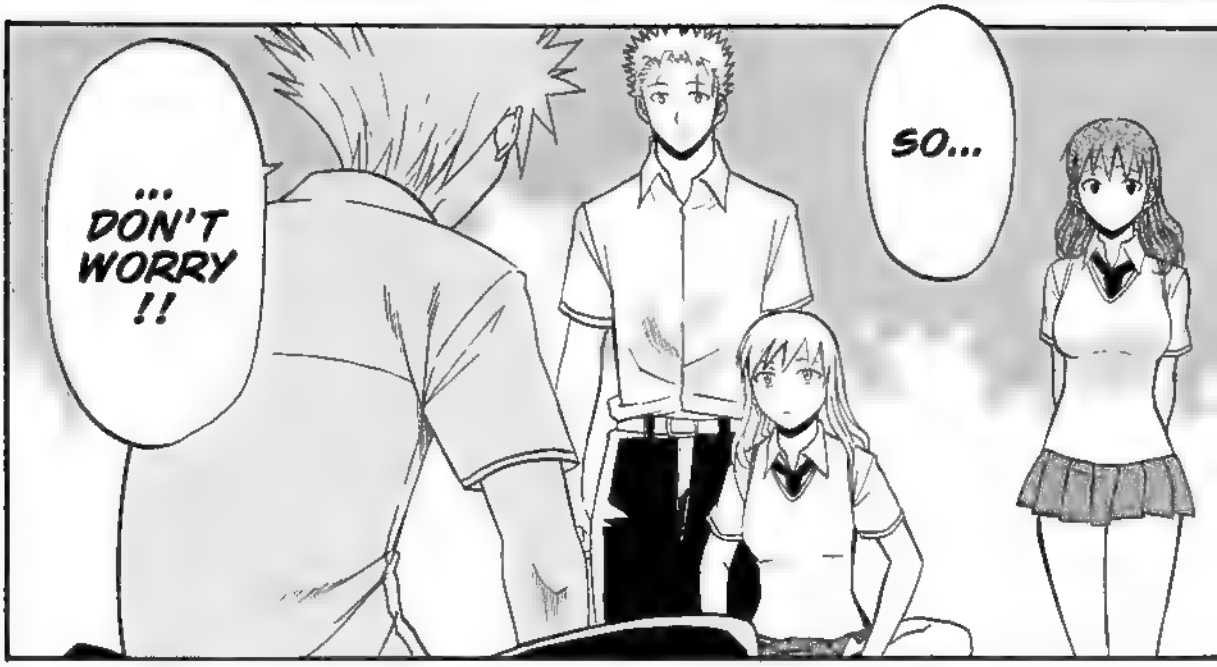

SO THAT'S WHY COUNCIL MEMBER AOKI'S ABSENT TODAY.
HMPH .....
"HUMAN-OIDS," IS IT?



THAT THEY'RE EVEN COMING FOR US AT SCHOOL NOW.
... CRAZY.

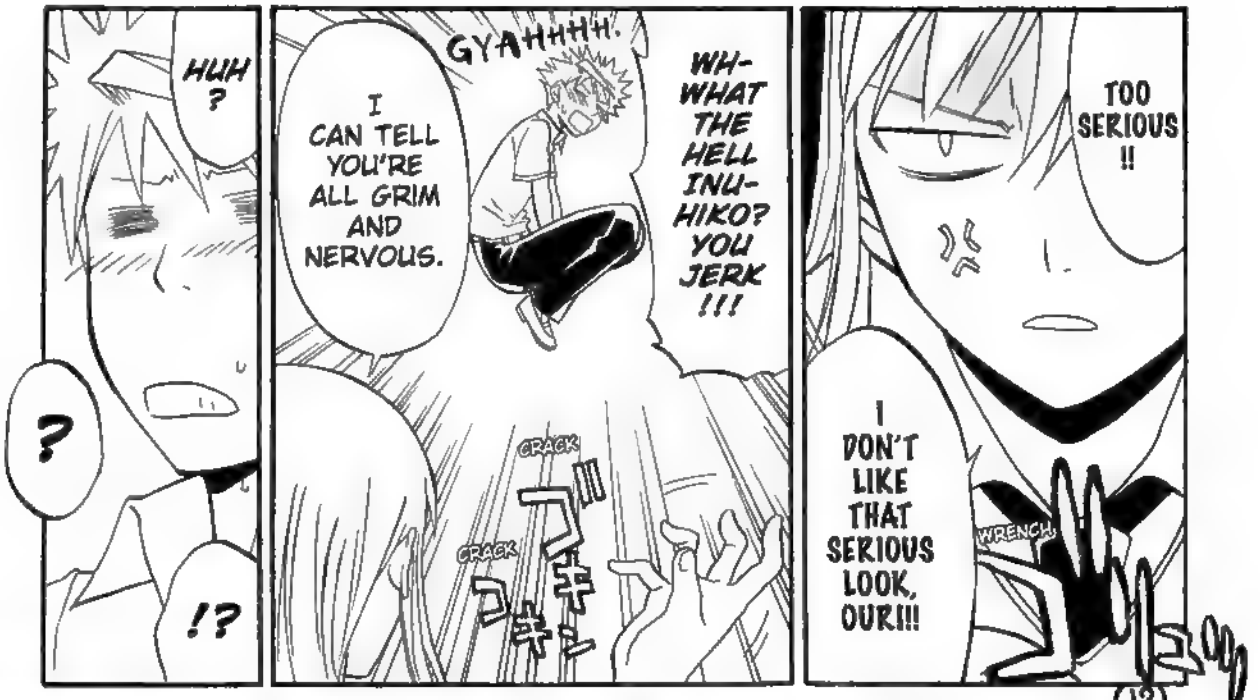

I'LL PRO-TECT YOU .....
IT'S OKAY .....

I'LL PRO-TECT ...
...EVERY-ONE.
WON'T LET 'EM LAY A FINGER ON ANY OF YOU.

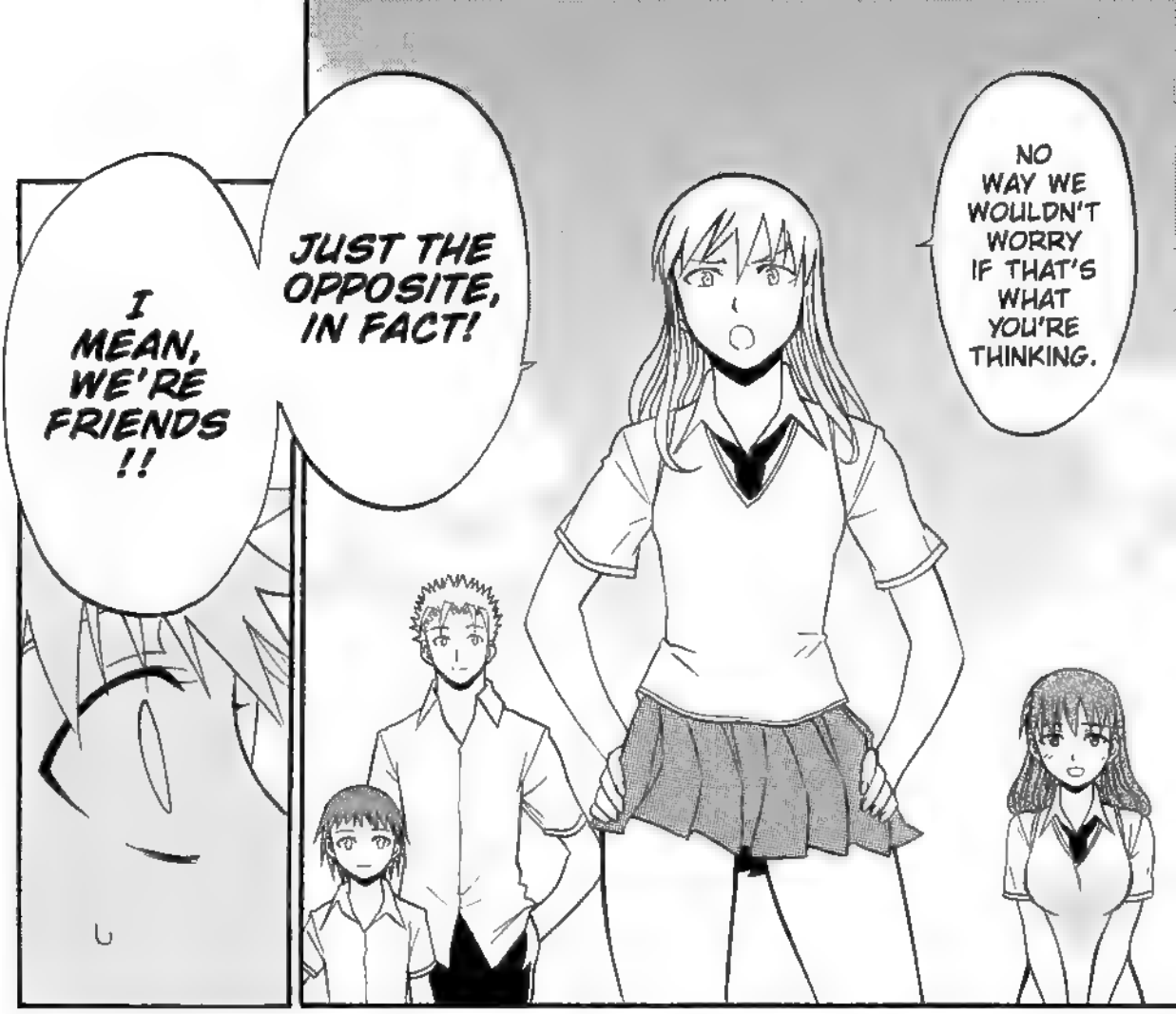

SO...
...DON'T WORRY !!

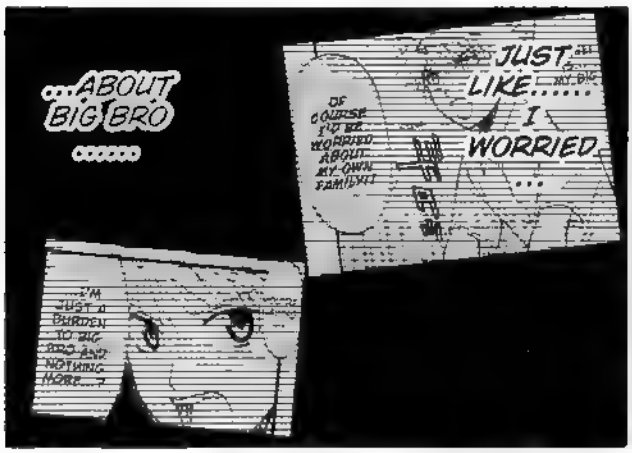
.....OURI.
RIGHT. THIS IS MY WORLD, NOW.
I'LL PROTECT IT ALL.
EVEN IF..... IT COSTS ME MY.....
?
LOOM

GRAB
!?
WHA-
!?
EHH.


HUH?
?
!?
I CAN TELL YOU'RE ALL GRIM AND NERVOUS.
GYAHHHH.
WH-WHAT THE HELL INU-HIKO? YOU JERK!!!
CRACK
CRACK
TOO SERIOUS!!
I DON'T LIKE THAT SERIOUS LOOK, OUR!!!
WRENCH
(!?)

YOU'RE THINKING OF DOING SOMETHING STUPID, RIGHT?
I'VE KNOWN YOU LONG ENOUGH TO SEE THAT.
THAT LOOK IS TELLING ME, "I'LL RISK MY LIFE TO PROTECT THEM," OR SOME DUMB CRAP LIKE THAT.
IT'S WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE!
!


NO WAY WE WOULDN'T WORRY IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
JUST THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT!
I MEAN, WE'RE FRIENDS !!

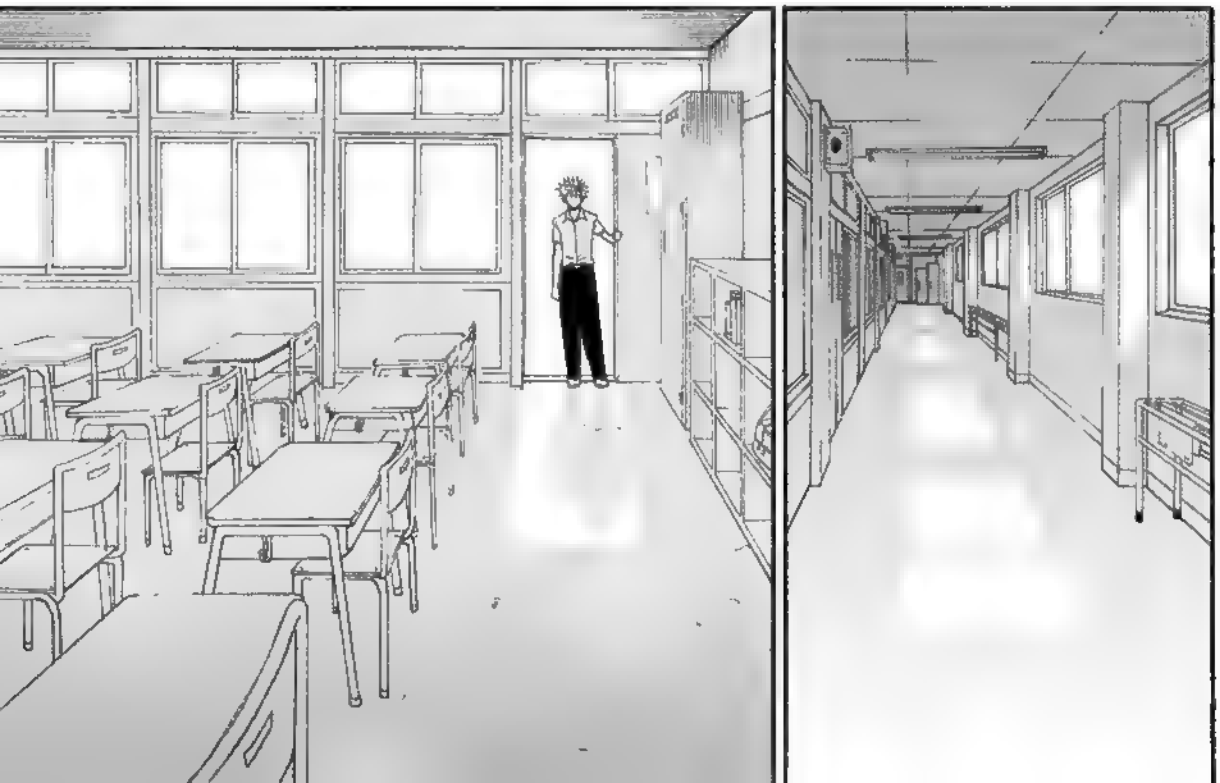

...ABOUT BIG BRO .....
JUST LIKE..... I WORRIED...
OF COURSE I'D BE WORRIED ABOUT MY OWN FAMILY!!
I'M JUST A BURDEN TO BIG BRO AND NOTHING MORE...?

JUST LIKE ME.....
IT'S LIKE..... RIGHT...
...WHAT'D DO WITH-OUT OU!!

.....AND THANKS.
YOU'RE TO-TALLY RIGHT.
SORRY.
I GET IT.
.....
SURE.

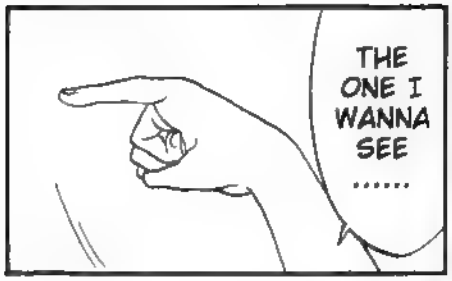
.....
OURI?
SHUDDER
CRUNCH

YEAH, YEAH.
GAH! HURRY THE HELL UP, OURI.
SURE THING.
AH.
I FORGOT SOMETHING IN CLASS. LEMME HEAD IN NOW.
IT'S..... NOTHING.



I GUESS THROWING OFF THIS MUCH BLOODLUST ...
... COULD EVEN ATTRACT A DUNCE LIKE YOU.
HEH-EH-EH-EH..... YOU NOTICED ME?
..... HEH.
TEP
TEP
TEP

!!


THE ONE I WANNA SEE .....

SO BRING THAT BITCH HERE, KID.
...IS MAKINA HOSHI-MURA.

I'VE GOT NO BUSINESS WITH YOU.
WHOA! DON'T SAY A WORD NOW.

..... YOU.

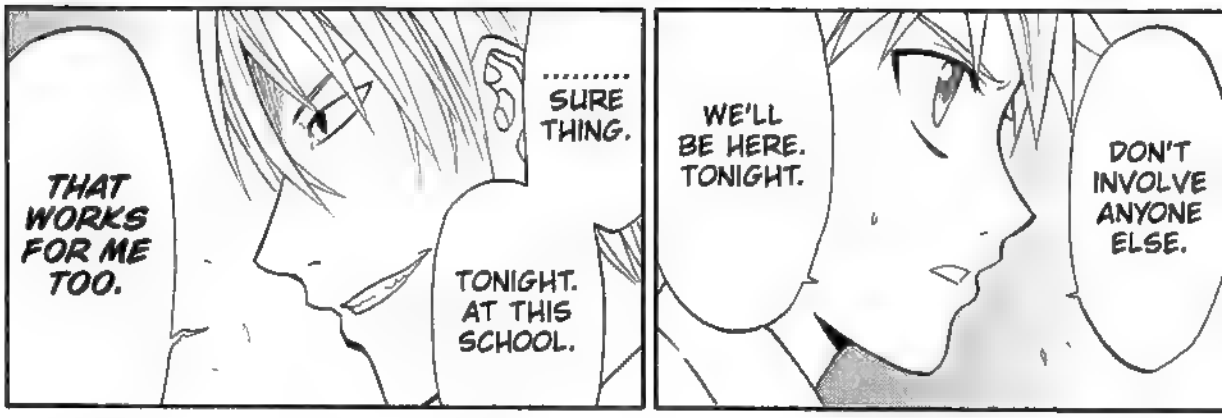
SHE WRECKED MY LAST BODY.
TAP
SO I CAN'T REST UNTIL I GET SOME PAYBACK.
.....
IF I DO .....
INCH

HYA-HA.
GO ON, REFUSE.
CRACK
SNAP
SNAP
CRACK
THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE A TRIP TO YOUR FRIENDS' HOUSES.
AND ASK THEM REAL NICELY IF THEY MIGHT PERSUADE YOU TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.

GUESSING YOU DON'T WANT YOUR LITTLE BUDDIES SCREAMING AND BEGGING FOR THEIR LIVES?
TWITCH
.....
DON'T GET COCKY, KID.
YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE HERE.

HEH.
HEH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH.
I WISH I COULD SMASH YOU INTO NEXT WEEK MYSELF, BUT .....
I'VE NEVER..... BEEN MORE FRUSTRATED BY MY OWN LACK OF POWER.
...TCH.
CLENCH

!?
HOW-EVER !!
! HYA HAA!!
FINE... I'LL BRING HER HERE.

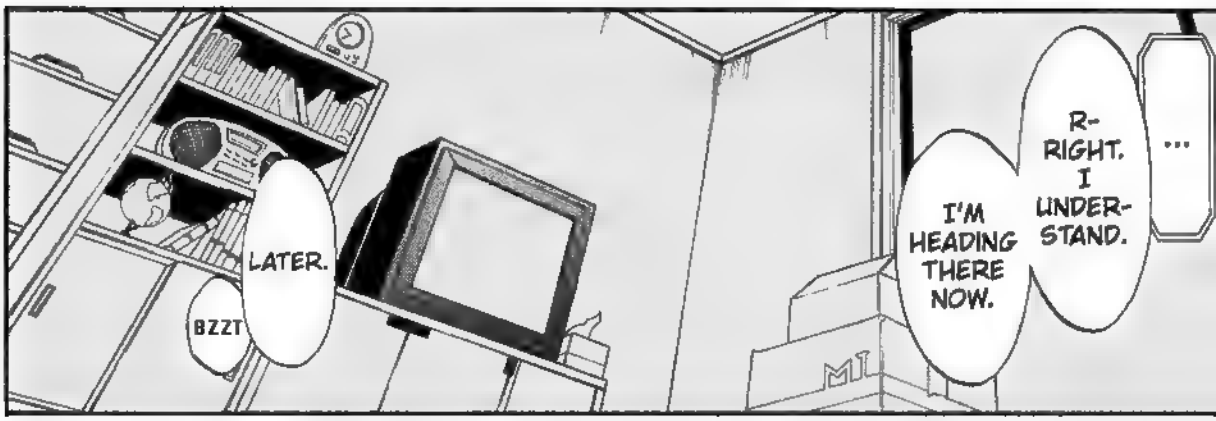

THAT WORKS FOR ME TOO.
..... SURE THING.
TONIGHT. AT THIS SCHOOL.
WE'LL BE HERE. TONIGHT.
DON'T INVOLVE ANYONE ELSE.

HAA.
CREAK
HAA.
KAGAMI
SPARRING...? NO NEED FOR THAT.
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GONNA BE FIGHTING ANYONE.
EH.....? BUT... THEN HOW DO I.....
CREAK
HAA.
HAA.
HAA.
CREAK
NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRAIN, HUMANS ARE NO MATCH FOR SHIKABANE.
IN A ONE-ON-ONE, ANYWAY.
YOU'D HAVE BETTER LUCK USING A GUN.
.....
SO BLUNT.
INSTEAD ...

...IT'S BETTER JUST TO HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL AND AWARENESS OF YOUR BODY.
THAT'S HONESTLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR A CONTRACTING MONK.
AWARE-NESS .....?
YEAH.
MAKING YOUR BODY MOVE JUST HOW YOU WANT IT TO IS SURPRISINGLY HARD.
LIKE HOW IN THE CHINESE MARTIAL ART TAI CHI, IT TAKES A SOLID YEAR OF PRACTICING TO BE ABLE TO MOVE SO SLOWLY AND FLUIDLY. OR HOW IT'D BE HARD FOR A NOVICE TO KEEP HIS FEET TOGETHER WHILE DOING A LONG JUMP.
WHAT YOU NEED ...ARE FEET THAT'LL MOVE FOR YOU WITHOUT FEAR. AND REFLEXES STRONG ENOUGH TO AVOID FATAL HITS.
GUH
UHH ...
STRAIN
YOU NEED A BODY THAT CAN DO THOSE THINGS.
SO KEEP TRAINING, AND ALWAYS STRIVE FOR THAT AWARE-NESS.
UNTIL YOUR BODY MOVES EXACTLY HOW YOU NEED IT TO.
IF YOU WANNA STAY ALIVE, THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT LIFELINE YOU'VE GOT...
HAA.

RING
RING
ACK!
THUD
CRASH
RING
Incoming Call
Shirae-son
FUMBLE
RIP
!?
WAHH.
.....
OWWW.
I BROKE
MY
THUMB-
NAIL.
.....
CRAP.
CRAP.
BZZT
YEAH,
HELLO?
CLICK
RIGHT
NOW.....
THERE
ARE NO
HUMANS
...
...INSIDE
THAT
SCHOOL.
IT'S
SHIRAE.
WE'RE
DONE
OBSERVING
THE
SCHOOL.
AND THE
BLOCKADE
IS UP.
!

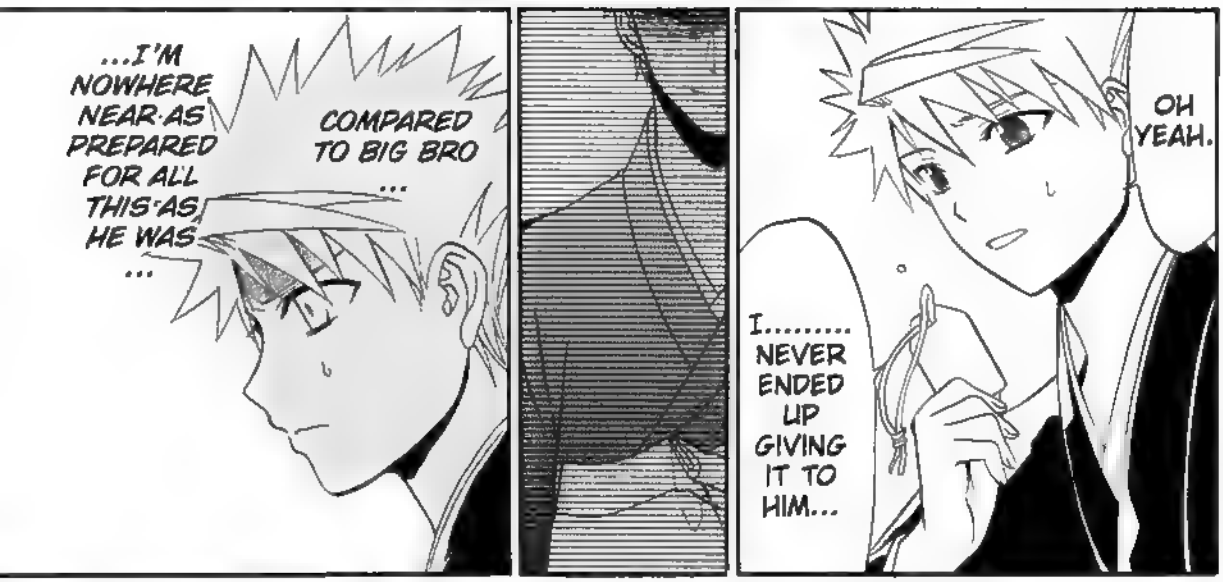
OUR SECURITY NET ONLY COVERS THE SURFACE.
IF THEY HAPPEN TO BE USING THE SEWERS ...
...IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO RECEIVE BACKUP HUMANOIDS INSIDE.
.....GOT IT.
GREAT. THANKS A LOT.
But .....
?


LATER.
BZZT
I'M HEADING THERE NOW.
R-RIGHT. I UNDER-STAND.
...

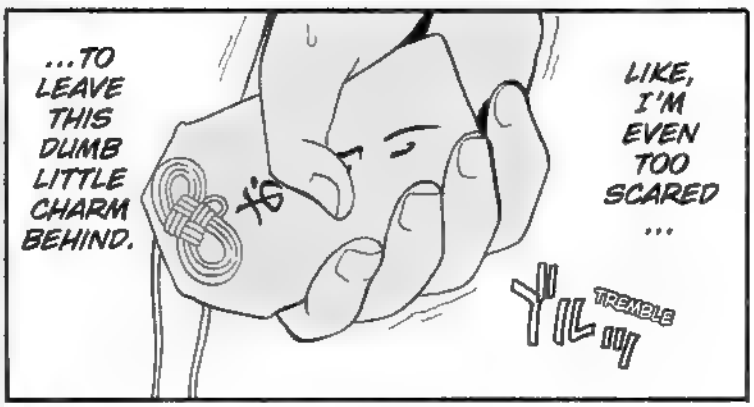
GRAB

.....
WRAP
ALL RIGHT.

おまもり
PROTECTIVE CHARM

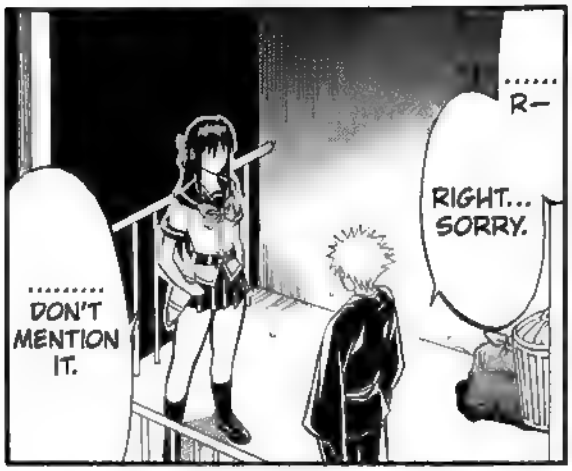

...I'M NOWHERE NEAR AS PREPARED FOR ALL THIS AS HE WAS ...
COMPARED TO BIG BRO ...
OH YEAH.
I..... NEVER ENDED UP GIVING IT TO HIM...

!
KLIK
ガラ
CRAP.


...TO LEAVE THIS DUMB LITTLE CHARM BEHIND.
LIKE, I'M EVEN TOO SCARED ...
TREMBLE

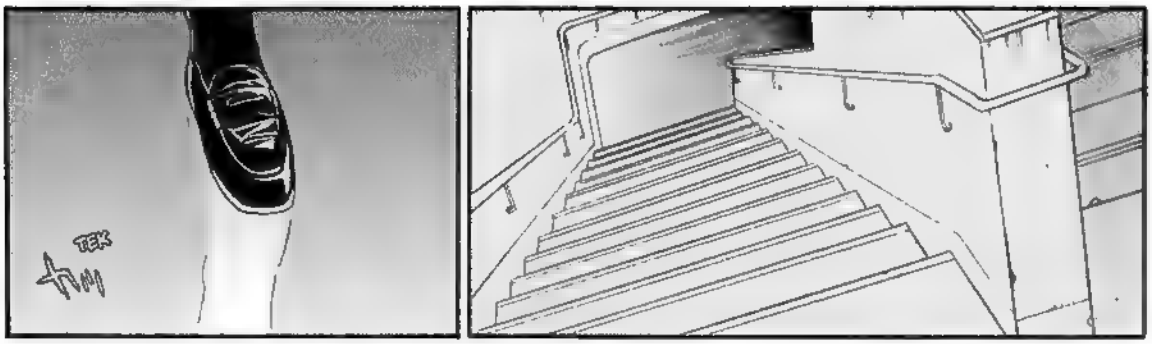
I CAME TO GET YOU.
THERE'S NO TIME. LET'S GO.

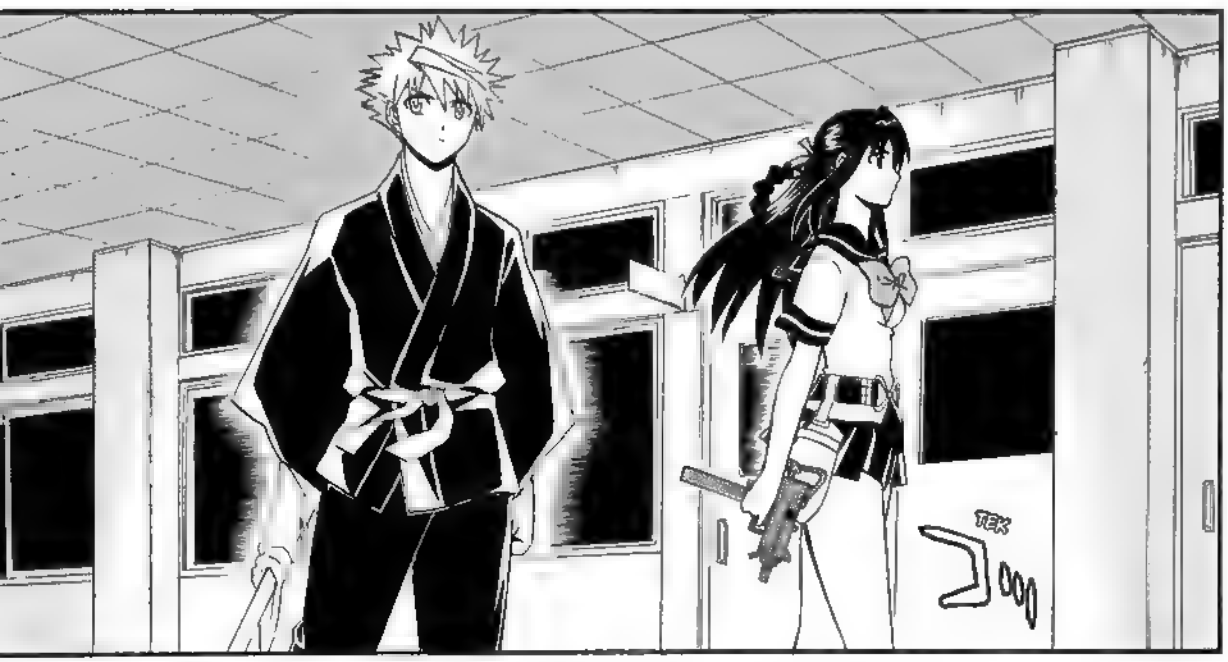
YOU'RE LATE.

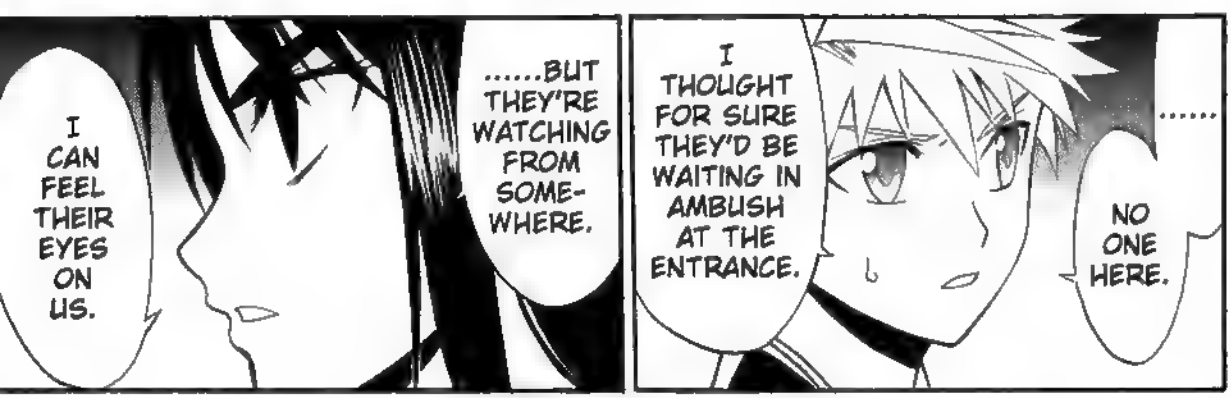

.....R—
RIGHT... SORRY.
..... DON'T MENTION IT.

TONIGHT... IS A GOOD NIGHT .....
EH? YEAH .....
DARK. AND QUIET .....

A NIGHT LIKE THIS .....
...IS PERFECT FOR A DEATHMATCH BETWEEN MY KIND.
.....
WHOOSH


TEK

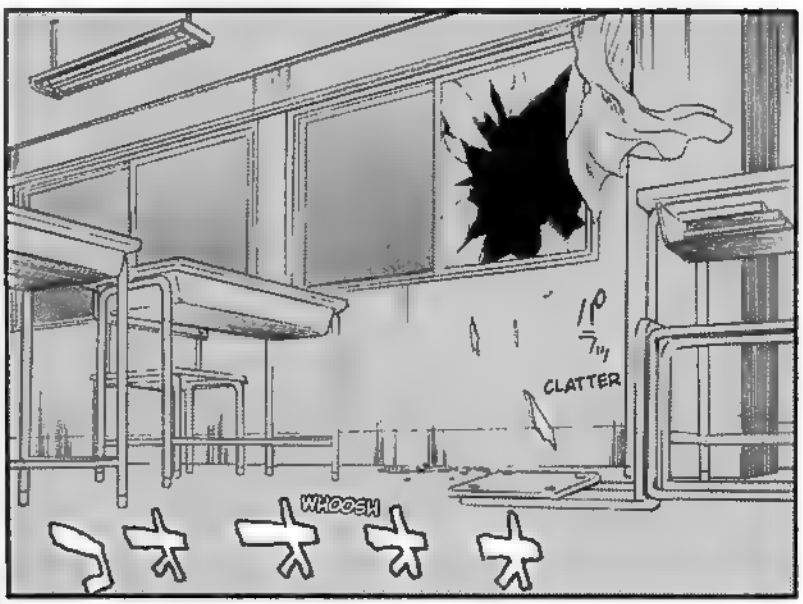

TEK


I CAN FEEL THEIR EYES ON US.
.....BUT THEY'RE WATCHING FROM SOME-WHERE.
I THOUGHT FOR SURE THEY'D BE WAITING IN AMBUSH AT THE ENTRANCE.
.....
NO ONE HERE.

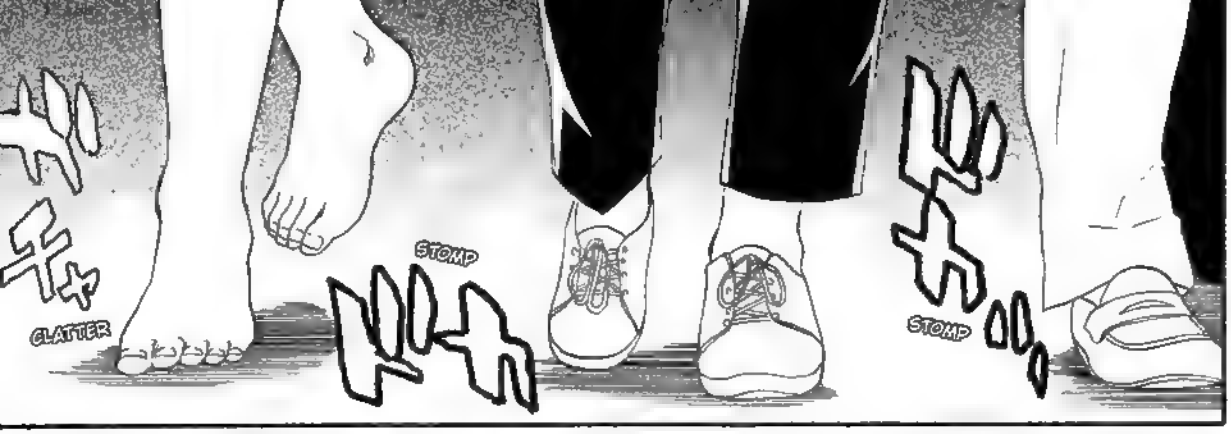
SOME-
WHERE
CLOSE
BY.
!?
WHOOSH
SLAM
CLICK
LOCKED

BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
CHAK
!
IT'S LOCKED !!
JIGGLE
!!
SLIDE

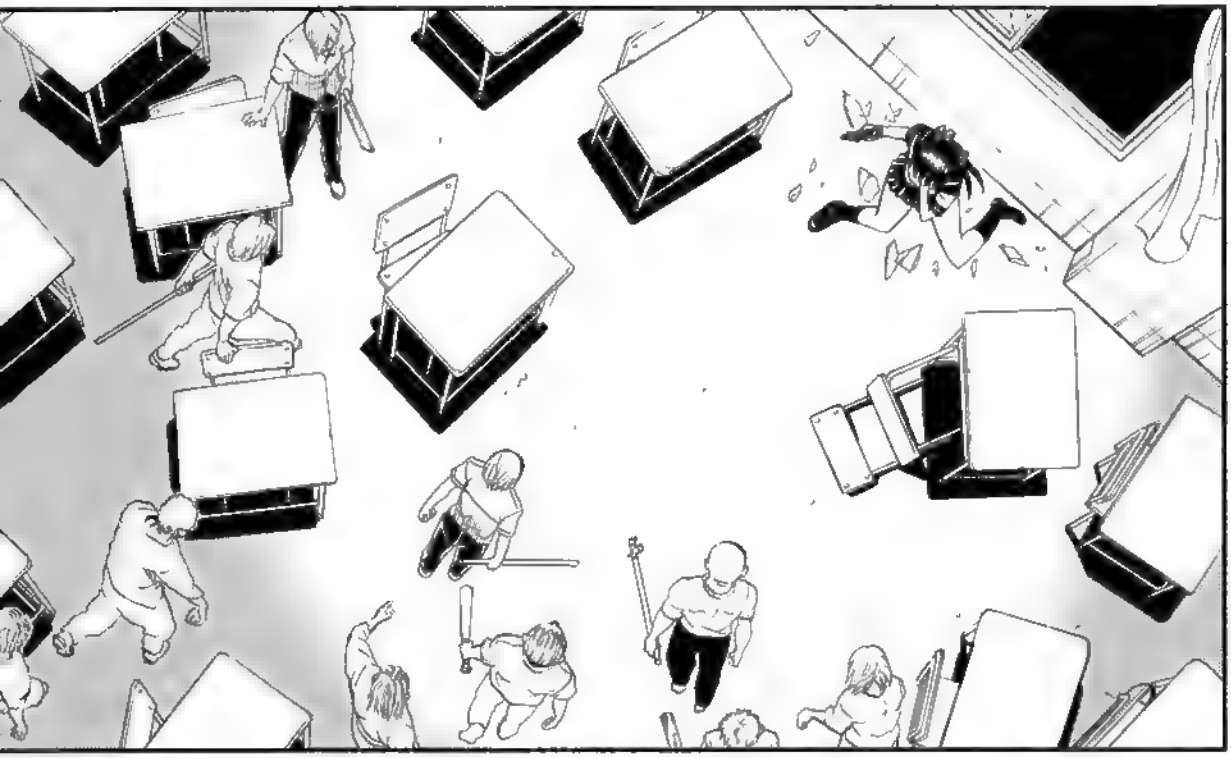
DOWN THERE .....!?
TCH .....
SWISH


CLATTER
WHOOSH

SQUEEZE
.....
AHHH.
HAA.
FLIP
WRENCH
HEE HEE HEE.
HEH ...
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
KAH .....
AHH ...
COFF!
COFF!
CHAK
.....TCH.
BURST
BOOM


CLATTER
STOMP
STOMP

MISS ME?
HEYA .....
HAA ...
HAA ...
HAA.



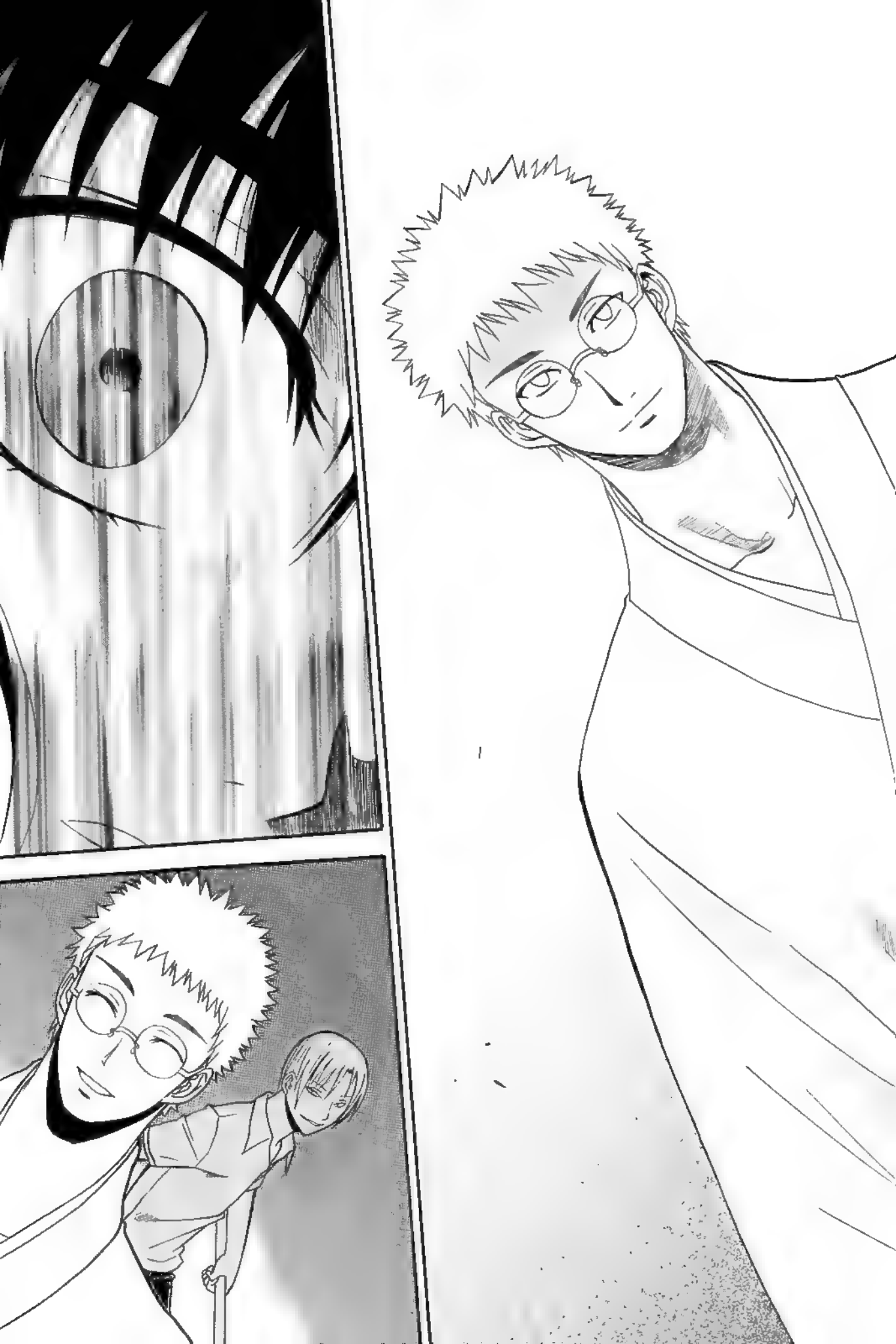
UWAHHH !!
SMASH
家庭科室
HOME EC ROOM
BOOM

...!
THESE GUYS !!
SMASH
KUH ...
GUH .....
SWIP
SWIPE
WHOOSH
IT'S BEEN TOO LONG.
!!
OHH..... WE MEET AGAIN, BOY.

SO YOU'RE THE HOSHIMURA GIRL'S CONTRACTING MONK NOW?
..... SEVEN STARS !!
!?
NOW, NOW.
DON'T FRET, BOY.
I'M JUST HERE TO OBSERVE.
WE'VE GOT A FUN SHOW THAT'S ABOUT TO START.
JUST WAIT HERE A WHILE.
WHAT'S THAT MEAN .....?
.....!?

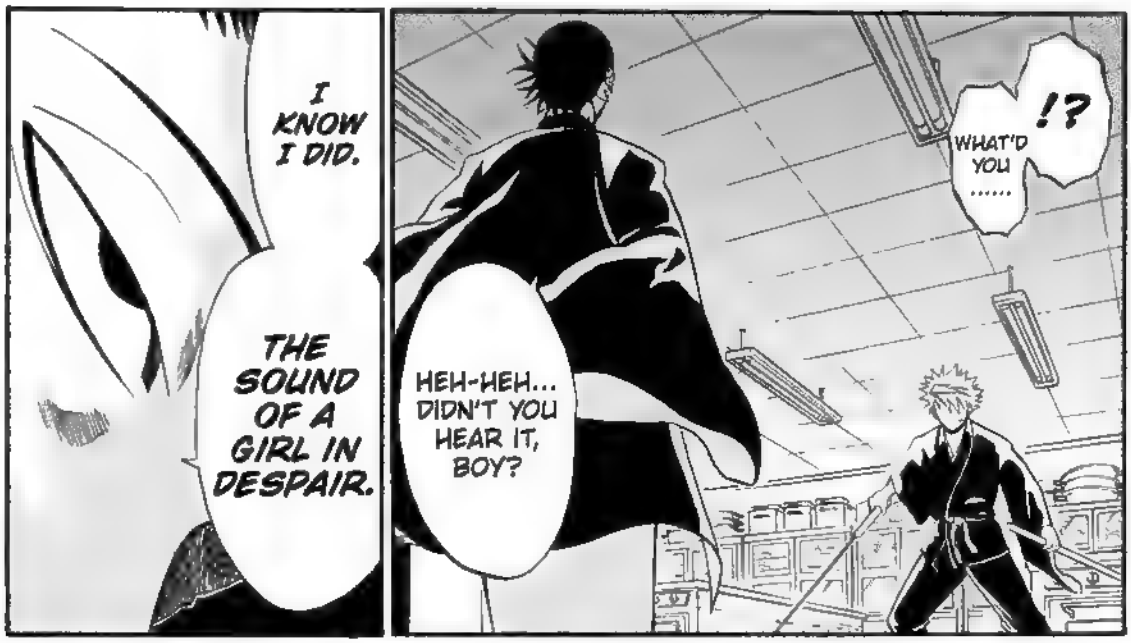
SWIPE
WHOOSH
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
TIMP
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
HAH .....
HA HA HA HA HA.
BOOM

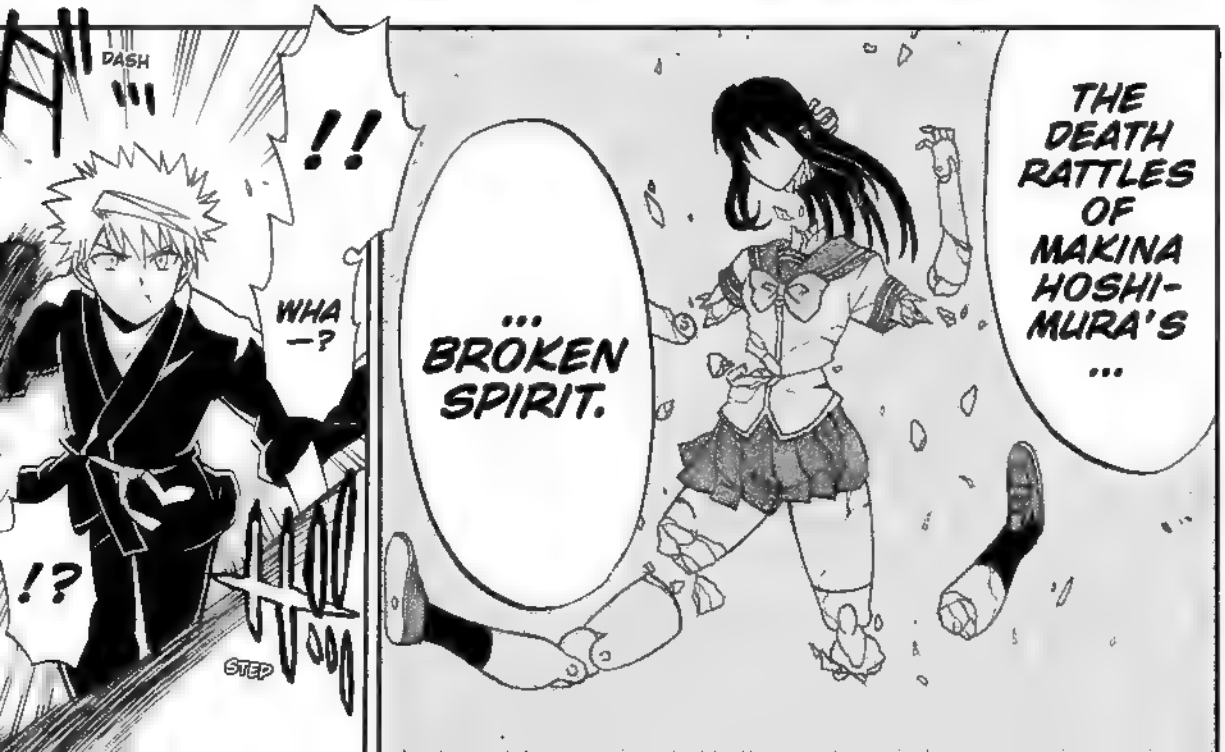
NOT BAD, BITCH !!
STRONG, AS EXPECTED.
BUT WERE YOU WORTH PREPARING THIS REWARD FOR!?
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
NO NEED TO KEEP HIM HIDDEN !!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
SLAM
PING
BAM
NO WORDS NEEDED, I'D SAY!!
PING
SLIDE
WE'RE ALL THINKING IT!!
TSK



...
NO WAY.
SLICE

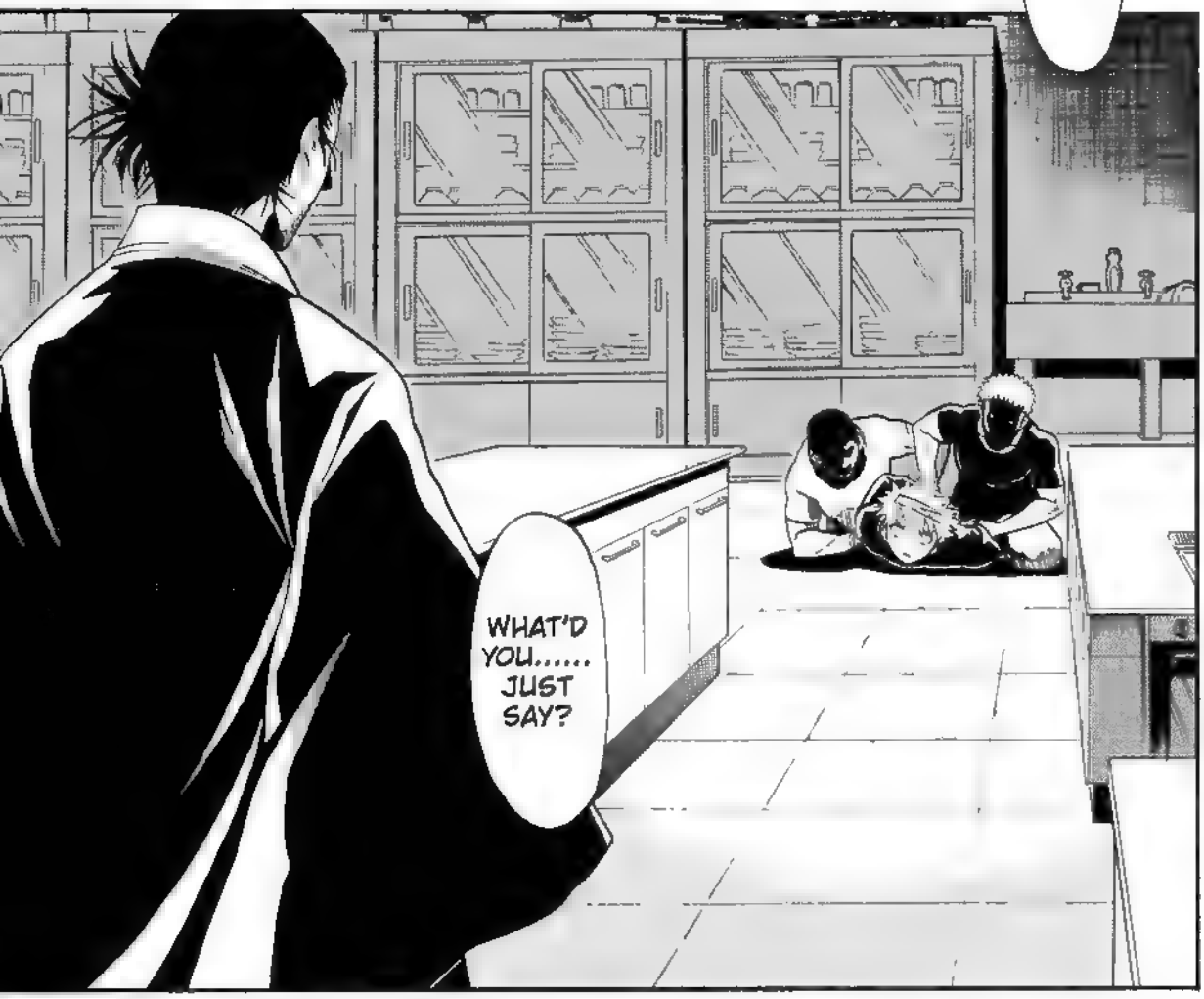
AHHH.
WHAT A LOVELY SHRIEK.


I KNOW I DID.
THE SOUND OF A GIRL IN DESPAIR.
!?
WHAT'D YOU .....
HEH-HEH... DIDN'T YOU HEAR IT, BOY?


DASH
!!
WHA —?
!?
STEP
... BROKEN SPIRIT.
THE DEATH RATTLES OF MAKINA HOSHI-MURA'S ...

SLAM
!!
...NOT YET.
THERE'S STILL MORE.
NOT UNTIL SHE'S TORN TO RIBBONS.
NOT UNTIL SHE GIVES HER LAST, DYING WAIL.

DEATH 29:
THE DEAD DON'T SMILE (PART 2)


.....WHA—?
WHAT'D YOU..... JUST SAY?

...THAT WAS THE HOSHIMURA GIRL SEEING HIM.
THAT SHRIEK WE JUST HEARD ...
I SAID, IT'S HER FORMER CON-TRACTING MONK.
COULDN'T HEAR ME, BOY?

CLENCH
.....!
THEY'RE AS PATHETIC AS HUMANS.
AND THEY WHINE LIKE BABIES IF YOU TAKE SOMEONE FROM THEM.
THEY LOVE, THEY RESPECT.
THEY TRUST.
CORPSE PRINCESSES ARE SUCH INFERIOR PRODUCTS.
.....SERIOUSLY.

THAT IS THE REASON FOR OUR VERY EXISTENCE.
"RESENT AND KILL." THAT'S ALL.
SHIKABANE ARE PURE.

WELL, THEY'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO DIE LIKE THAT.
GRIND
THOSE WHO CAN'T EVEN DO THAT...

LIMP
SHAK
!?
THUMP
THUMP
HAA.
HAA.
HAA.
HOW DEXTEROUS OF YOU, TO PLUCK THE TWIG FROM YOUR STAFF WHILE PINNED DOWN.
ANISE, POISON, IS IT.....?
!
..... OHH.

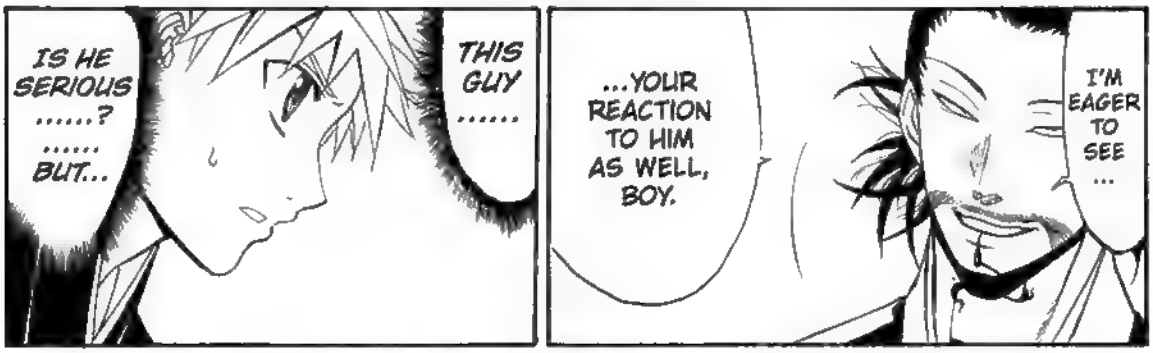
CLANG

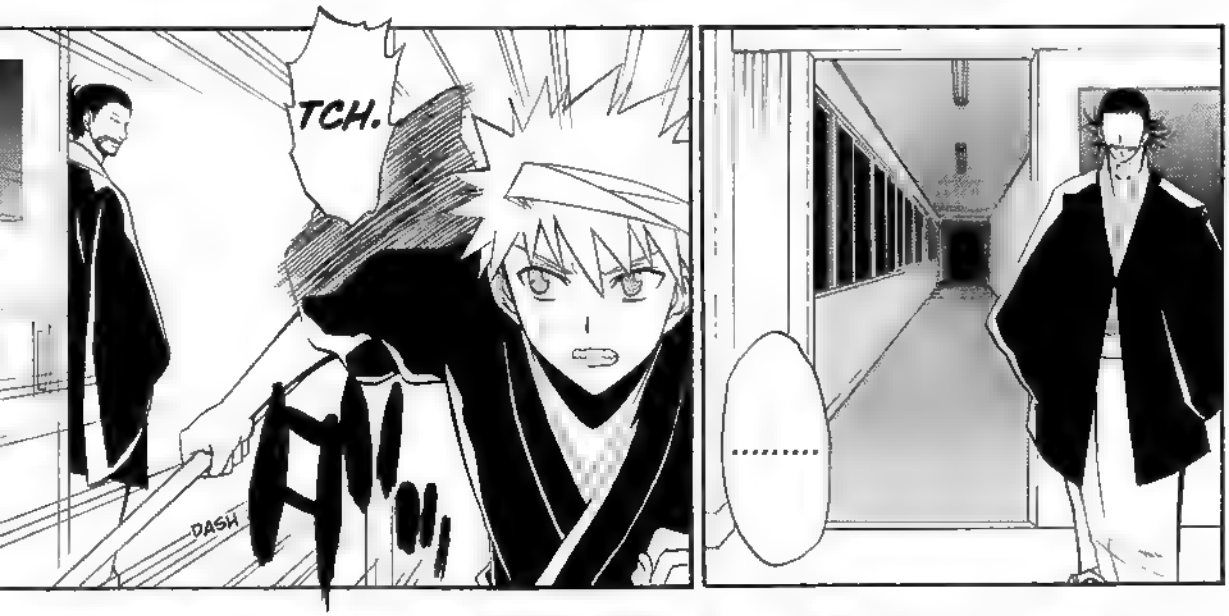
HEH HEH.
WORRIED FOR YOUR CORPSE PRINCESS?
GRIND
GRIND
GRIND
NO NEED TO FRET, BOY.
I'LL LET YOU GO TO HER IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.

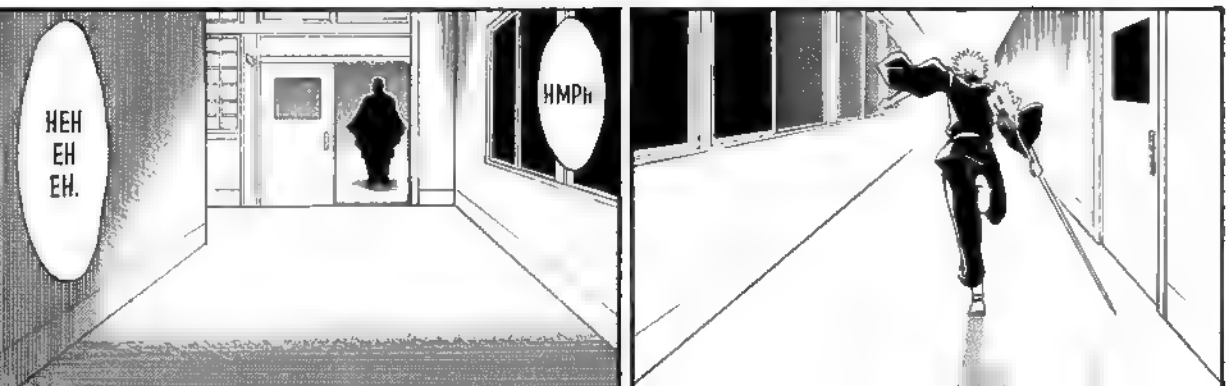
!!
TCH .....
SKID
SKID
SKID
SKID
CLANG

!?
WHA—?

I JUST REMEMBERED ...
YOU WERE AN ORPHAN RAISED BY THAT SAME MONK.
HEH-EH-EH .....
THIS IS A KARMIC REUNION, INDEED.


THIS GUY .....
IS HE SERIOUS .....? ..... BUT...
I'M EAGER TO SEE ...
...YOUR REACTION TO HIM AS WELL, BOY.


TCH.
DASH
.....


HEH EH EH.
HMPh

HEH-EH-EH.....

SHOW ME..... BOY.

SHOW ME A HUMAN WRITHING IN PAIN IN HIS FINAL MOMEMNTS .....

HEH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH-EH.....

DEATH 29: THE DEAD DON'T SMILE (PART 2)

YEAH?
KEISEI. ……
I WANT YOU TO KILL ME.

IF EVER .....
IF I EVER COME TO RESEMBLE THESE SHIKABANE I HATE...
...DRIVEN BY NOTHING BUT REGRET AND RESENTMENT ...
...YOU NEED TO KILL ME.
IF EVER I LOSE MYSELF TO HATRED AND RAGE ...
CLENCH
...THERE'S NO WAY I'D WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT.....
SO.....
DRAPE
WAHH !?
!
KYAHH.

...CUT IT OUT.
STOP MAKING ME SAD WITH ALL THAT CRAP.
!?
K-KEISEI. HUH?
WHAT'RE YOU .....!?
THIS IS ONLY YOUR THIRD SHIKA-BANE HUNT.
YOU'VE STILL GOT 105 TO GO.
IT'S A LONG ROAD AHEAD, MAKINA.
AND FEEL FREE TO TRUST ME. RELY ON ME. PLEASE.
THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF US BEING A TEAM, YEAH?
BUT DON'T LET IT BURDEN YOU SO MUCH.
YOU'VE GOT A CLEAR ENEMY, AND YOUR HATRED FOR THEM RUNS DEEPER THAN MOST SHIKABANE ARE CAPABLE OF.
..... YOU'RE NOT LIKE ORDINARY SHIKABANE, YOU KNOW.

LIKE, EVEN IF YOU'RE THE TYPE TO GO ALL-OUT WHEN COMPETING AGAINST A CHILD... BEATING THEM BADLY ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM CRY...
EVEN IF YOU STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY IT'S HARD FOR ME TO TRUST YOU, GIVEN STUFF LIKE THAT...I'LL TRUST YOU. FOR NOW.
FOR NOW.
.....
OH.
.....
YEAH. GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
.....

JUST TAKE RESPON-SIBILITY— TO THE VERY END.
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.
BEFORE YOU TAKE ON SO MUCH WITH THIS "WORK" THAT YOU END UP DROWNING, I'M GONNA REEL YOU IN.
.....
SORRY.
BUT...

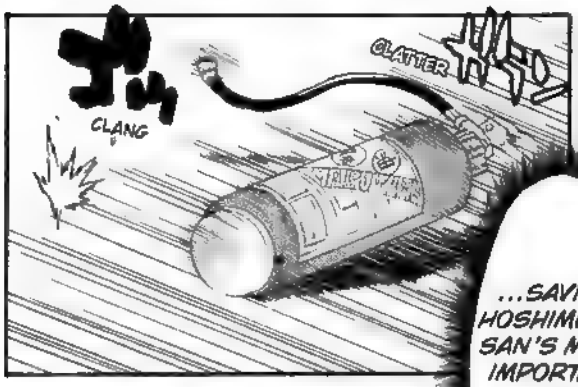
I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO.
THOUGH AT YOUR SIZE, YOU MIGHT JUST DROWN US BOTH.
HEY.
.....
YEAH. I PROMISE.

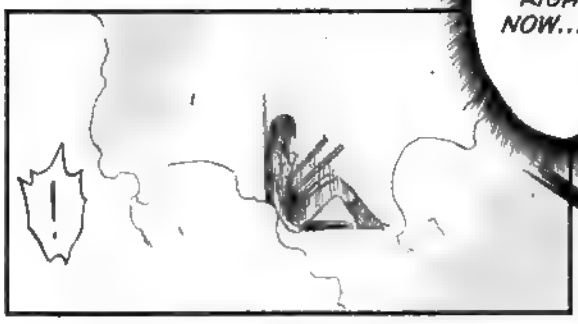
SPLAT
TWITCH
WHOOSH
HEE.
CLATTER
CLATTER
HEE.
HEE-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA.
AHAHAHA.

LOOK AT HER. HAH.
THIS DUMB BITCH IN HER LAST MOMENTS... SO PATHETIC.
HYA HAH. THIS IS THE BEST.
I FEEL SO FUCKING GOOD.
HEH.
SHE REALLY WENT NUTS BACK THERE.
ALL BECAUSE SHE SAW THIS FACE OF MINE.
HMPH.
EVEN WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.
THE SECOND SHE SAW YOU, SHE FROZE UP AND GOT ALL WEEPY .....
SKID
SKID
SKID
UWAHH.
SLAM
SMASH
TINKLE

.....!
SKID
SKID
ARE THEY ALL HUMANOIDS!? INCLUDING THE KNOCKED-OUT ONES, THERE'RE OVER THIRTY OF THEM...
!
.....
NO.
!! BIG BRO !!?
...
BUT..... THAT'S NOT MY BIG BRO!
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIM, BUT .....
THAT'S THE BIG BRO HUMANOID THAT THE SEVEN STARS GUY MENTIONED ...!
..... IT'S NOT HIM.
I'LL KILL .....
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
TWINGE
..... GUH.
SHIT..... YOU...
CLATTER

!?
PSSSSHHHH
... YOU.
BWAH.


CLANG
CLATTER


!

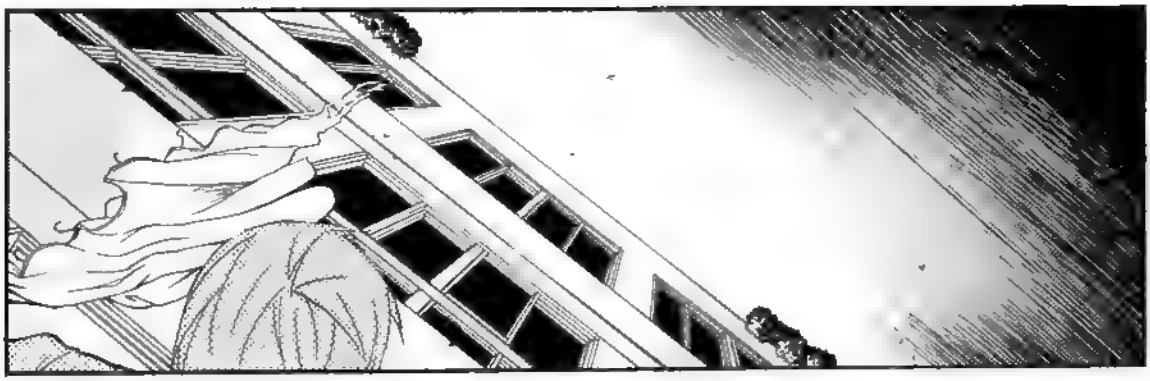
THESE HUMANOIDS HAVE TO BE TAKEN DOWN, BUT...
...SAVING HOSHIMURA-SAN'S MORE IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW.....
FIRST, WE GOTTA GET AWAY FROM HERE .....
FSSSHHH

COVER THE EXIT!!
HEY!!
GUH.
SHIT..... THAT BASTARD ...

FOOM
.....!
...TO CATCH ONE LITTLE HUMAN ?
HOW HARD CAN IT BE...

!?
..... GONE !?

SHIT... I UNDER-ESTIMATED THAT KID.
AND HE TOOK THE GIRL WITH HIM ...?
GUH... OUT THE WINDOW ...?



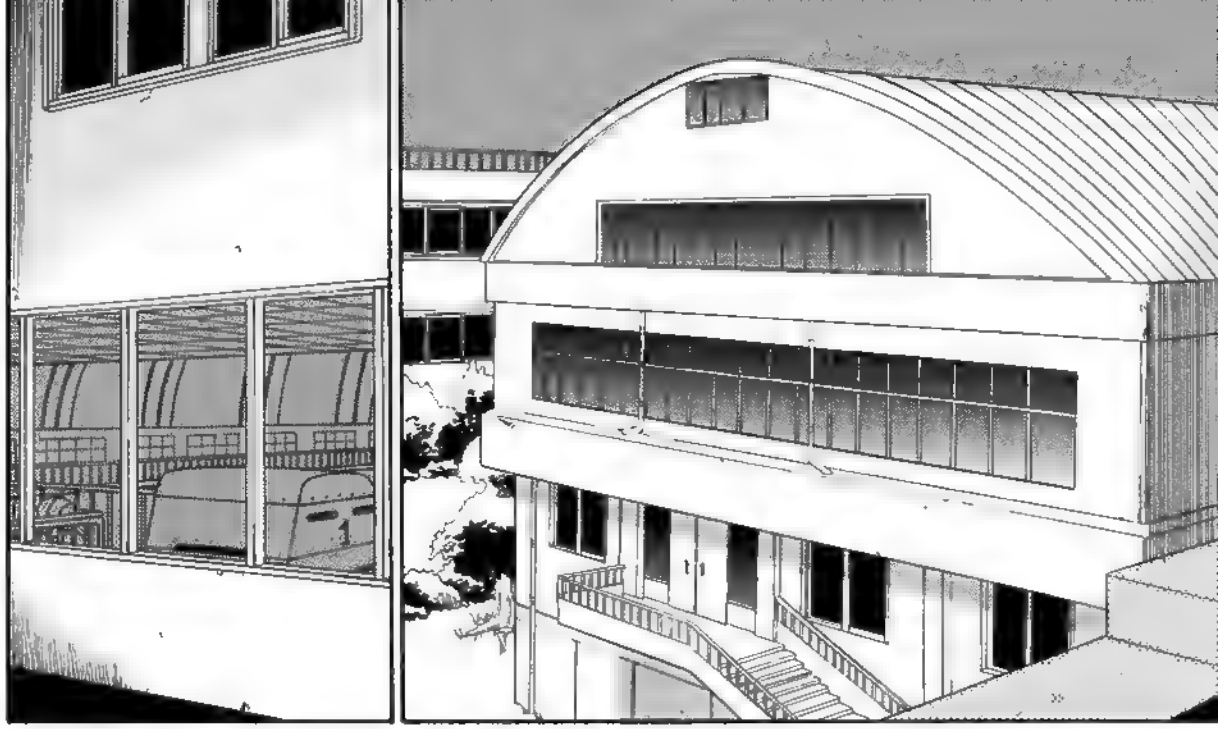
HAA.
HAA.
HAA.

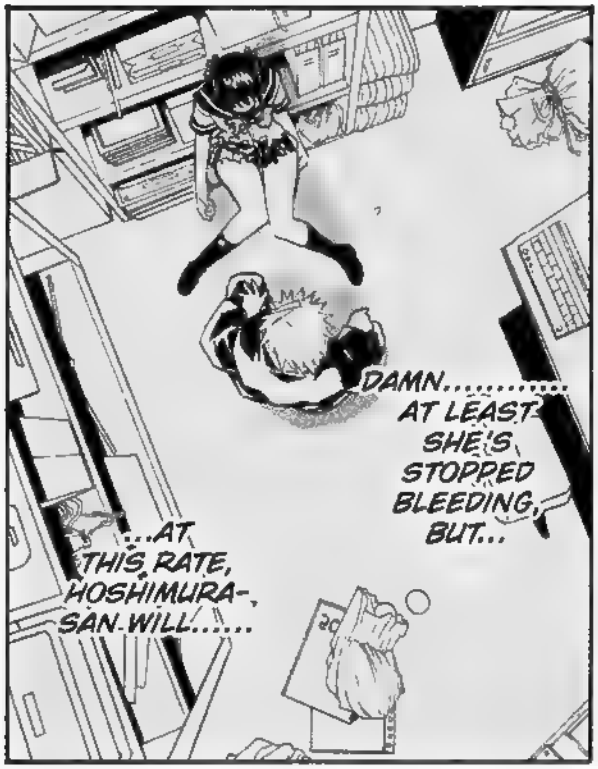
DON'T TRY TO TALK !!
THIS IS MY SCHOOL.
I KNOW A BUNCH OF PLACES TO HIDE AND ALSO WHERE TO GET YOU SOME FIRST AID.
DRIP
WHY'D YOU..... GO AND..... PULL A—
.....
IDIOT.
CRAP !!
STAY WITH ME...!!
.....!
OF COURSE .....
...THAT THING WASN'T KEISE! .....
!
HE MIGHT HAVE LOOKED LIKE BIG BRO...
...BUT THAT WASN'T REALLY HIM.....
..... I..... KNOW THAT.

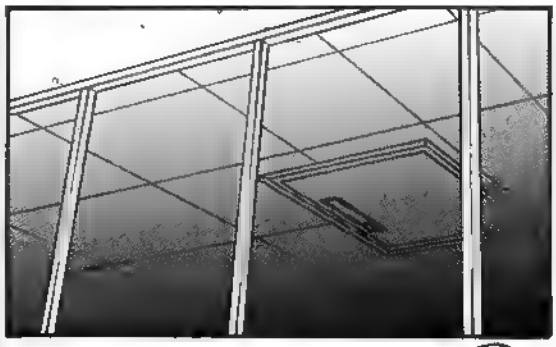
BUT .....
...EVEN THOUGH I UNDER-STOOD THAT.....
...FOR SOME REASON..... MY BODY... WOULDN'T MOVE FOR ME.....
GRIND
...../

HEY, CALM DOWN.
THEY'VE NOWHERE TO RUN. YOU'LL GET THEM... STILL...
WE CAN'T LET 'EM LEAVE THE SCHOOL !!
FIND THEM!! ALL OF YOU STILL STANDING— SEARCH THIS PLACE TOP TO BOTTOM !!
FUCK.
FUCK !!
KICK

..... TCH.
YEAH... GOT IT.
WE'RE ONLY HELPING YOU OUT BECAUSE ENA-SAN ASKED.
WE'RE HUMANOIDS. WE OBEY OUR OWN DESIRES.
MAKE NO MISTAKE.




DAMN.....
AT LEAST SHE'S STOPPED BLEEDING, BUT...
...AT THIS RATE, HOSHIMURA-SAN WILL.....



YOU OKAY, HOSHI-MURA-SAN?
..... YES.

HOPEFULLY WE CAN BUY SOME TIME HERE .....
UP IN THIS LOFT.
THIS GYM IS RELATIVELY FAR FROM THE FRONT GATE..... AND IT'S NOT LIKE ALL OF THEM KNOW THIS CAMPUS WELL.

TURN

.....
BUT ...
JUST NEED TO GET HOSHIMURA-SAN BACK UP TO FIGHTING STRENGTH IN THE MEANTIME .....
PLEASE, HOSHIMURA-SAN..... YOU HAVE TO FIGHT.....!
CRAP.
...NO GOOD ?
...IN THAT CASE ...
THIS SCHOOL..... IT'S REALLY AN IMPORTANT PLACE TO ME. .....I HAVE TO PROTECT IT.
NOW..... BEFORE TONIGHT'S OVER, I HAVE TO BEAT THOSE HUMANOIDS.
BUT I NEED YOUR STRENGTH FOR THAT, HOSHIMURA-SAN!

I MEAN .....
..... WELL ...
!

DOES THAT MEAN ...
...YOU'D FIGHT AGAINST THAT KEISEI LOOKALIKE ?

HE'S..... NOT THE REAL THING.
EVEN SO... ... COULD YOU REALLY KILL THAT KEISEI!?

I..... COULDN'T DO IT.
I KNOW HE'S A HUMANOID. A FAKE. WHATEVER... BUT I JUST CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO KILL KEISEI !!

!!

..... YOU MEAN ...
...YOU REALLY COULD...? THAT MEANS .....!!

YOU'RE SAYING YOU COULD !?
IF I KILL HIM .....
.....IF I CAN, THEN YOU'LL—

...YOU DIDN'T CARE ABOUT KEISEI AS MUCH AS I DID.
THAT MEANS ...

.....I...
.....!

FOUND YOUUUU.
LOOM

GRAWL
FOOLS. HEH-EH-EH-EH-EH.
THOUGHT YOU COULD DECEIVE US AND HIDE UP HERE?
I SAW RIGHT THROUGH YOUR CLEVER LITTLE PLAN.
!?
TURN
HEH-EH-EH.....AN *UPSTART* BRAT AND A SHELL-SHOCKED PIECE OF TRASH.
SHWF
SORRY, BUDDY...
...NAH. NOT SORRY AT ALL, ACTUALLY.
...BUT I'LL BE KILLING THESE TWO IN YOUR PLACE .....

..... HMM. REALLY, BRAT?
YOU WANT TO RUMBLE? WITH ME?
CLANG
!
YOU'RE DEAD !!

CAN YOU REALLY KILL ME!?
BUT I'M YOUR DEARLY DEPARTED.
IF YOU'RE UP TO THE CHALLENGE ...
GWAHH!
... COME AT ME !!!

STAB
WHAT ……
…THE……HELL ……?
…!?

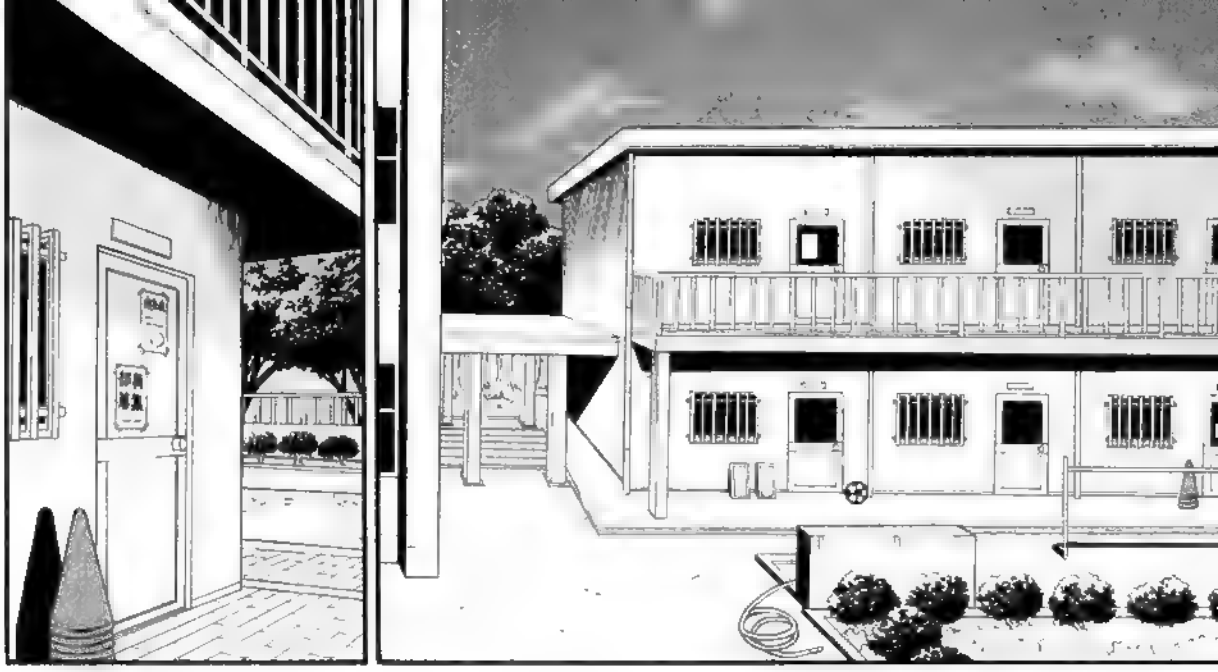
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP
RAHH
HH
HHH
H
SMASH
HH
!!
!!
TINKLE
HE REALLY .....
YOU'RE KIDDING ME.....
AH.
NUH .....
SMASH
THUD
!!
HAA.
HAA.
HAA.

HOW COULD YOU .....?
YOU..... I KNEW IT...
..... HOW ...
HOW .....
CLENCH

WE'VE GOTTA FIND A NEW HIDING SPOT.
HOLD ON...
HEY.
STEP
THAT FALL ALONE WON'T HAVE KILLED HIM.
... LET'S GO, HOSHI-MURA-SAN.

...
... GAH ...
THUD
COLLAPSE
WAIT!! STOP RIGHT THERE!!

COUGH
GASP
BLUHH ...
GAH.
BLEEARGH !!
SPLATTER
SPLATTER
COUGH
..... SORRY.
CRAP... THIS FEELING'S REALLY THE WORST.
BIG BRO, I...
I WAS LURED OUT.
EVEN IF THAT WAS A FAKE...
..... THIS TIME I WAS FORCED TO STAB HIM INTENTIONALLY.
.....
TREMBLE
I'M..... PATHETIC.
..... SERIOUSLY.
TREMBLE



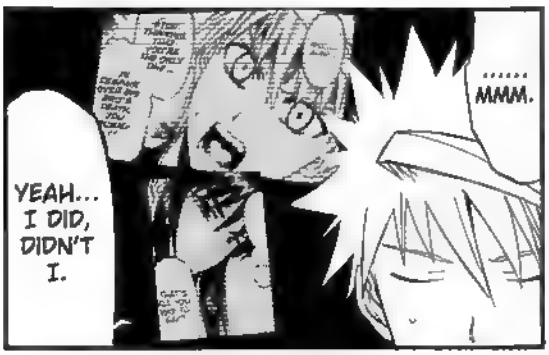
COFF...
HOSHI-MURA-SAN.
I THINK..... I'M OKAY NOW. YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP STANDING WATCH ..... I APPRECIATE IT, THOUGH.

.....
WHY'RE YOU BEING SO NICE...
...AFTER I TREATED YOU LIKE THAT .....?

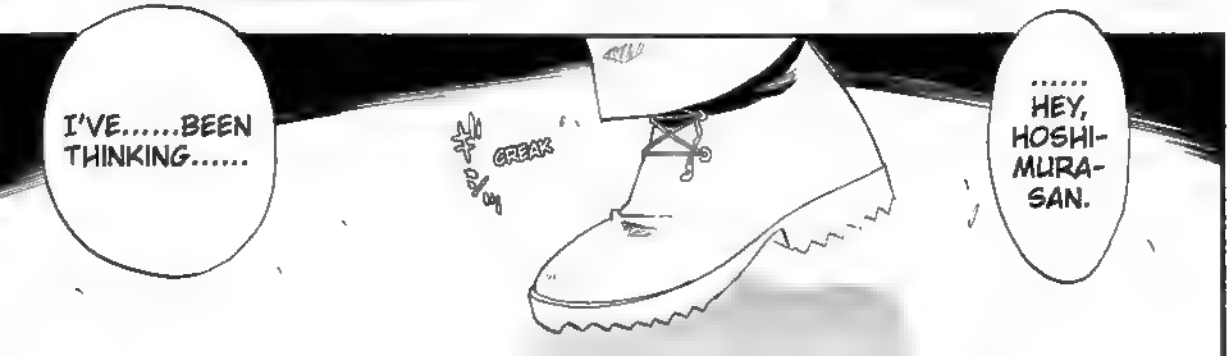
I'M FINE .....
DOING BETTER THAN YOU, ANYWAY.
..... UGH.

EH?
I WAS..... A LITTLE FULL OF MYSELF.
.....I'M SORRY, OURI.

ACTING LIKE... I WAS THE ONLY ONE THE WORLD ...
...TRULY GRIEVING FOR KEISEI. I WAS WRONG.


..... MMM.
YEAH... I DID, DIDN'T I.

EVEN THOUGH .....
...YOU ACTUALLY POINTED THAT OUT TO ME, OURI.....


I'VE.....BEEN THINKING.....
GREAK
..... HEY, HOSHI-MURA-SAN.

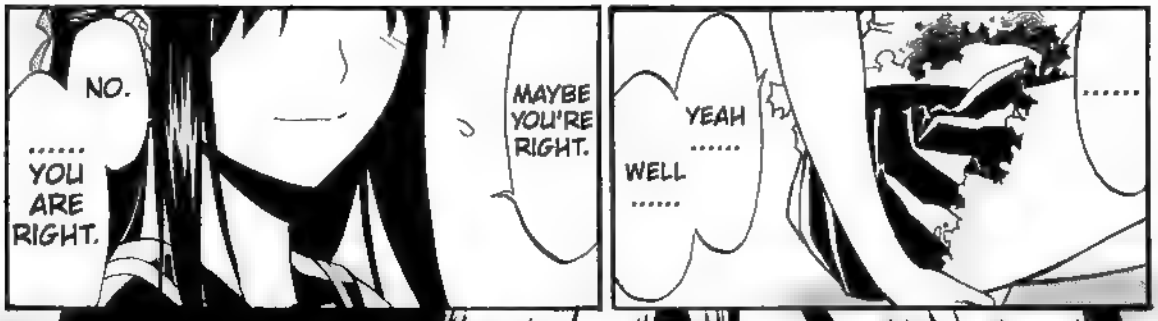
YOU, WITH YOUR CURSE .....
...IS THERE ANY WAY YOU COULD KEEP YOUR CONTRACT WITH ME..... CURSE AND ALL?
!!
SLIDE
都立棟
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING?
..... IDIOT.

I'LL ADMIT IT MYSELF.
RIGHT NOW..... I'M MUCH MORE TROUBLE THAN I'M WORTH.
I'M A CORPSE PRINCESS WITH A CURSE THAT'LL BE AN UNBEARABLE BURDEN ON YOU...
THE REGRETS FUELING MY CURSE COME FROM MY LINGERING BOND WITH HIM. THAT IS, NOT MY CURRENT CONTRACTING MONK.

..... BUT ...
AND THE BOND-SEVERING WAS SUPPOSED TO PREVENT THAT, YEAH?
IS IT... MINE ...?
CRAP MY BODY IT'S DOG MY WOUNDS GETTING WORSE
OKINA PAINT
BACK DURING THE FIGHT WITH THAT SHIMEN GUY, I FELT MY BODY START TO SHUT DOWN .....
..... I KNOW ALL THAT.

I HATE THE IDEA OF CALLING THE BOND BETWEEN YOU AND BIG BRO A "CURSE" !!
EVEN SO!

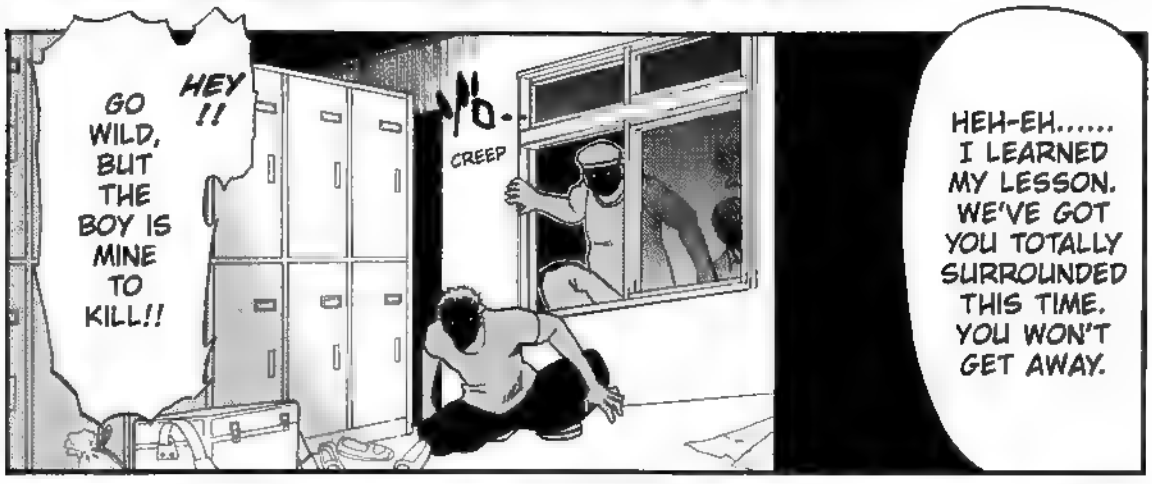
I MEAN, HOSHIMURA-SAN.....I CAN TELL HOW MUCH YOU REALLY LOVED BIG BRO.....
GWAHH!!
TWITCH
ぴくっ
N-NO... UMM .....
.....SERIOUSLY? NOW'S WHEN YOU CHOOSE TO BLUSH?
はぁと
FLAIL
YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH.
はぁと
FLAIL
JUST ADMIT THAT MUCH. YOU'D BE MAD IF IT WEREN'T TRUE.
UWAHHHH H


MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
NO. ..... YOU ARE RIGHT.
YEAH ..... WELL .....
.....

YES .....
I... DID LOVE KEISEI. .....I STILL DO.

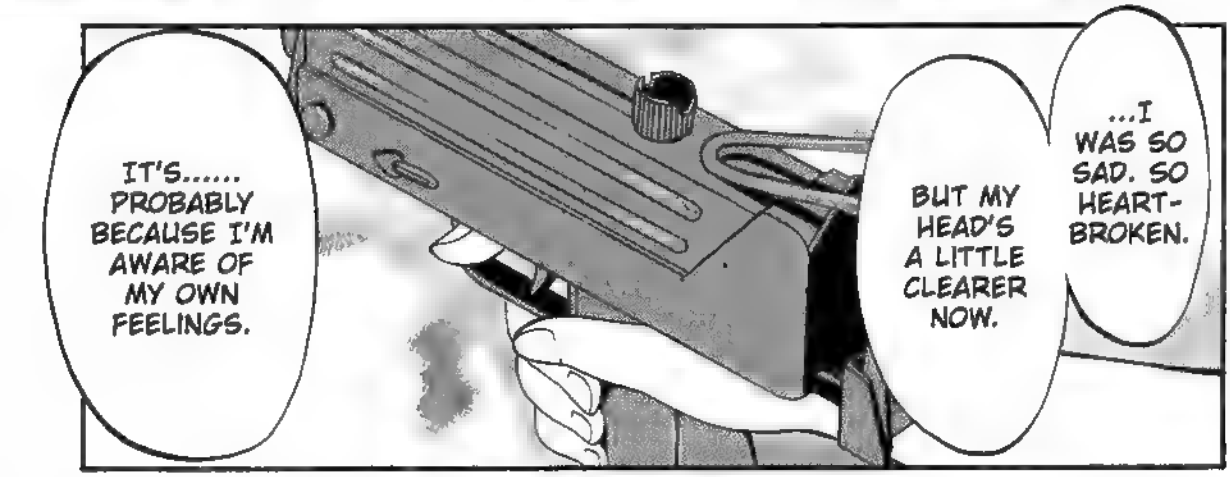
IT'S LIKE .....
...I FELT YOU WERE TRYING TO MAKE KEISEI A THING OF THE PAST.
THAT'S WHY I WAS SO MAD.
AT YOU, TRYING TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOT-STEPS.
THE FACT THAT YOU TWO WERE SO CLOSE ...
...MADE IT EVEN WORSE.
BUT ...
I... JUST DON'T WANT EVERYTHING BIG BRO DID TO GO TO WASTE..... THAT'S ALL.
I..... ONLY JUST REALIZED THAT.
JUST LIKE ME, YOU'VE BEEN STRUGGLING TO DEAL WITH YOUR FEELINGS WHILE STILL STAYING STRONG.
YOU'RE NOT JUST SOME FILL IN FOR HIM.

HEH EH EH... FOUND YOU.
BRAT... YOU'LL PAY FOR THAT.
WHAM
!


HEY !!
GO WILD, BUT THE BOY IS MINE TO KILL!!
CREEP
HEH-EH..... I LEARNED MY LESSON. WE'VE GOT YOU TOTALLY SURROUNDED THIS TIME. YOU WON'T GET AWAY.

WHY ORIHIME WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT ME.
STAND
I GET IT.
HUH?
GLARE

HUH !?
KA-CHAK
...I WAS SO SCARED OF A KEISEI IMPOSTOR .....
CAN'T BELIEVE ...

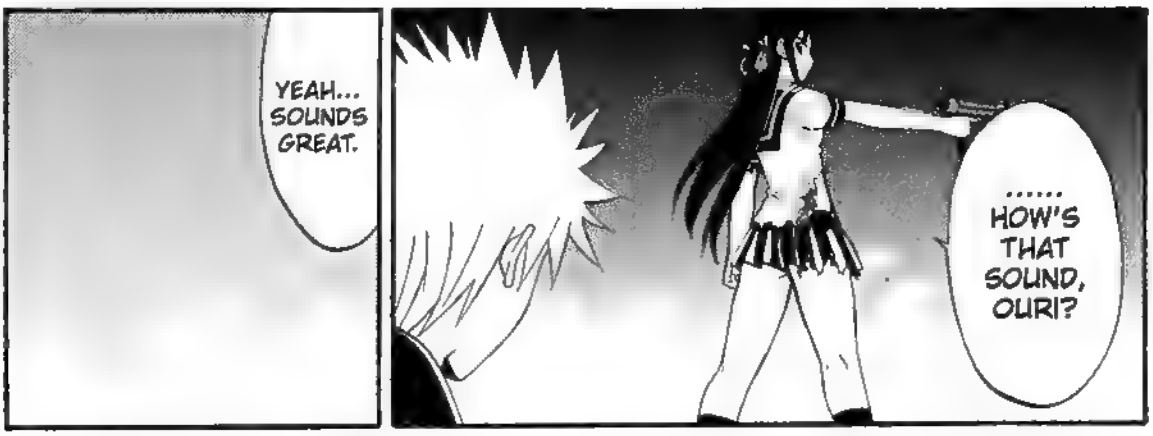

IT'S..... PROBABLY BECAUSE I'M AWARE OF MY OWN FEELINGS.
BUT MY HEAD'S A LITTLE CLEARER NOW.
...I WAS SO SAD. SO HEART-BROKEN.

IDIOT OR NOT, HE WAS STILL A MILLION TIMES BETTER LOOKING THAN YOU.
STUPID HUMANOID.
KACHAK

SPLATTER
FWOOM
WHOOSH
...N—
NO WAY ...
SPLORT
SPLAT

.....FOR FORMING THAT CONTRACT WITH ME.
FOR SHOWING ME THE WORLD ONCE MORE.
FOR BEING MY ALLY.
THANK YOU, KEISEI.
OOZE
OOZE
OOZE
RISE

SWIRL
THIS CURSE IS MADE OF THE MEMORIES OF MY BOND WITH KEISEI.
IT'S PROOF THAT MY FEELINGS WERE HERE IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

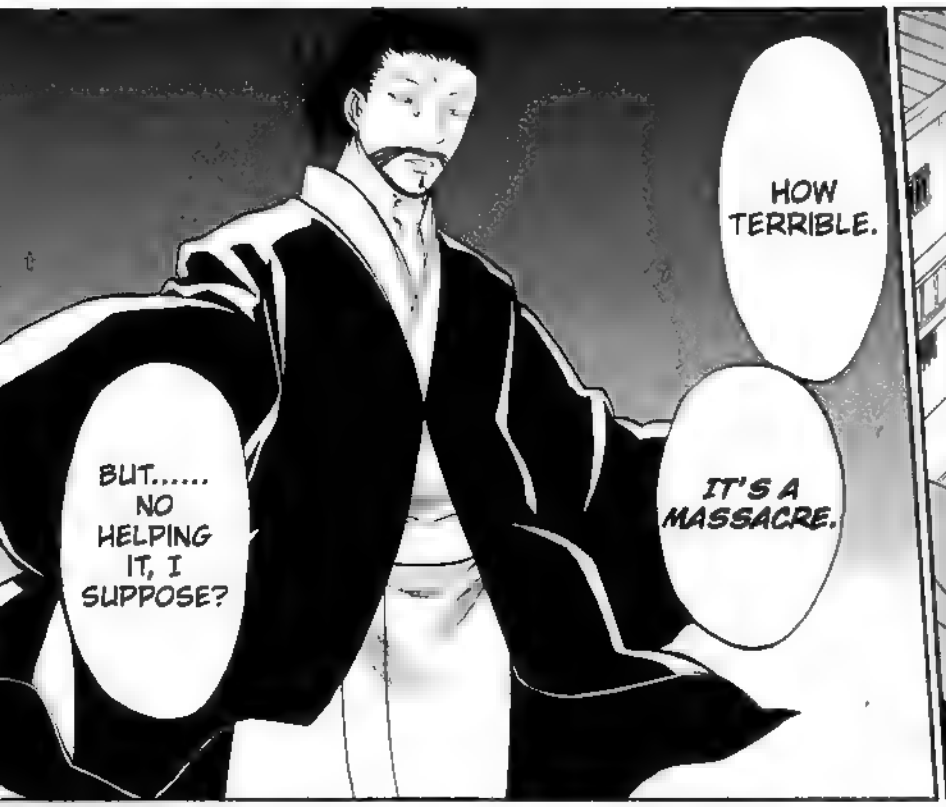

YEAH... SOUNDS GREAT.
..... HOW'S THAT SOUND, OURI?

IT'S A PIECE OF YOUR ONCE HUMAN HEART.
YOU'RE A CORPSE PRINCESS— NOT AN ABERRATION, AND THAT CURSE IS YOURS.

NEVER !!
I WON'T.
YOU MIGHT REGRET THIS.
ﾆﾔ
GRIN

WH-WHAT DO I DO?
ドクン
BADUM
BUT HOW.....I MISCALCULATED...
!!
YOU GUYS !!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE!! GO! KILL TH—
!?
.....
ピク
TWITCH
ピク
TWITCH
...SERIOUSLY? THEY'RE ALL...
...SCARED STIFF!?
WHO WE JUST BEAT THE SHIT OUT OF!?
ZOOM
SCARED OF THIS ONE LITTLE GIRL?

SLAM
BOOM
BLAM
BLAM
GAHH.
GYAHHH.
GWAHH
...


HOW TERRIBLE.
IT'S A MASSACRE.
BUT..... NO HELPING IT, I SUPPOSE?

AHHHH.
SLAM

SO NATURALLY, MERE HUMANOIDS WOULD SUCCUMB TO SUCH PRIMORDIAL FEAR.
WHILE SHIKABANE FEAR HUMAN EMOTIONS, WHICH THEY THEMSELVES HAVE LOST.
HUMANS INSTINC-TIVELY FEAR DEATH AND SHIKA-BANE.

...SO VERY ELUSIVE. THAT'S WHY IT THRIVES.
"FEAR" IS...

THIS LOVE AND DEVOTION NONSENSE... TRULY, GIRL...
...YOU TAKE THE WRETCHED JOKE TOO FAR.
..... STILL, WHAT A THIRD-RATE FARCE.
IT'S SO RIDICULOUS I COULD LAUGH.
!
RING
...IN THE END, I'M GRATEFUL SHE'S SAVED ME THE EFFORT.
WELL... ANYHOW ...
CRASH
WHAM

SHE'S LIKE..... AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PERSON .....!!
!! DAMMIT..... THIS BITCH...
I THOUGHT I'D GET TO HAVE FUN AND FULFILL ALL MY DESIRES.
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN ?
THIS ISN'T WHAT I WAS PROMISED AT ALL .....!!
BETTER RUN AW—
THIS IS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO HANDLE.
DAMMIT !!
TCH.
SHIT, SHIT, SHIT !!
DASH
W-WAIT !!
I WON'T BOTHER YOU EVER AGAIN!! SO PLEASE ...
NO MORE!! I GIVE!!
WHOOSH
RUNNING AWAY.....? BUT WHERE TO?

SMASH
IDIOT.
YOUR GROVELING MEANS NOTHING TO A CORPSE PRINCESS.
SHIT!! SHIT..... SHE GOT ME.
BUT...
DOESN'T MATTER..... I CAN JUST CHOOSE ANOTHER BODY.....
I'LL HAVE ENA-SAN REVIVE ME AGAIN.
!?

THEY WERE JUST .....
R-REALLY.....? FROM THE VERY START.....
WHAT... THE—? I'M FALLING APART.
..... BUT WHY?
FSSHH
BURST
BURST
BURST
SIZZLE
CLICK
WELL DONE, HUMANOIDS.
YOU SHOULD BE HONORED.
THE REGRETS AND MALICE OF THE DEAD YOU'VE BEEN SPREADING HERE AT THE SCHOOL HAVE *SEEPED* IN. AND NOW WE CAN FINALLY BEGIN...
... OUR TRUE PURPOSE ...
THE FINAL EXPERIMENT FOR THE LAND OF THE DEAD.

HOSHI-MURA-SAN.
THOSE WOUNDS... HOW'RE YOU DOING?
I'M FINE.
..... NOT SURE WHAT HE WAS AFTER, BUT I JUST DID A SWEEP AND COULDN'T FIND THE SEVEN STARS GUY.
HAA.
HAA.
..... RIGHT.
YOU HELPED ME FIND THE STRENGTH TO FIGHT FOR IT.
THANKS, HOSHI-MURA-SAN.
FOR HELPING ME PROTECT WHAT MATTERED TO ME.
.....

PLUS ...
..... NAH.
IT'S JUST MY JOB. THAT'S ALL.
MORE THAN ANYTHING... I'M HERE TODAY BECAUSE KEISEI GAVE ME A PIECE OF HIMSELF.
IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN JUST UP AND QUIT FIGHTING.
..... HEY. IS THAT ...?
YEAH... FROM KEISEI'S SUN-GLASSES... LIKE A MEMENTO, FROM HIM.
KINDA PATHETIC, HUH?
I'M STILL CLINGING TO THIS LITTLE FRAGMENT, UNABLE TO LET GO...
..... IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
I'VE..... GOT SOMETHING SIMILAR.

I MADE THIS...FOR BIG BRO. I WAS GONNA GIVE IT TO HIM..... THE NIGHT HE ENDED UP DYING.
THIS LITTLE CHARM..... HE NEVER GOT IT, SO NOW IT NEEDS A NEW HOME.
INSIDE, THERE'S A PIECE OF COLLAR FROM THIS CAT I HAD, ONCE.
おまもり
PROTECTIVE CHARM
HOW ABOUT YOU TAKE IT, INSTEAD?
.....HEY.
FOOL! I CAN'T TAKE IT JUST LIKE THAT. IT'S KEISEI'S.
ORIGINALLY, I MEANT IT TO BE PROOF OF MY FAITH IN HIM.....
...THE PIECE OF COLLAR INSIDE REPRESENTS SOMETHING IMPORTANT THAT BIG BRO ONCE TAUGHT ME.
PLEASE DO.
PROOF THAT I'M GONNA CARRY ON BIG BRO'S WILL.
AND PROOF THAT YOUR FEELINGS AREN'T JUST SOME "CURSE," HOSHIMURA-SAN.
..... AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE IT NOW. AS PROOF.

IT'S LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO GET THE SHORT END OF THE STICK.....
DUMMY.
.....
LET IT GIVE YOU FAITH IN YOURSELF. LET IT PROTECT YOU.
OH, STOP.
WE BOTH LOVED HOW BIG BRO DID THAT FOR US, RIGHT?
MR. CONTRACT HOLDER.
I'LL TAKE IT.
OKAY..... FINE.
..... YEAH.

I MIGHT NOT BE AS GOOD AS BIG BRO WAS, BUT ...
...I'LL DO MY BEST TO STICK BY YOU, HOSHIMURA-SAN.
SOUNDS GOOD.
AND IF YOU DO HAPPEN TO SCREW UP...
...I'LL GET YOU BACK ON TRACK WITH SOME WARNING SHOTS FROM MY M11.

Corpse Princess 6 End

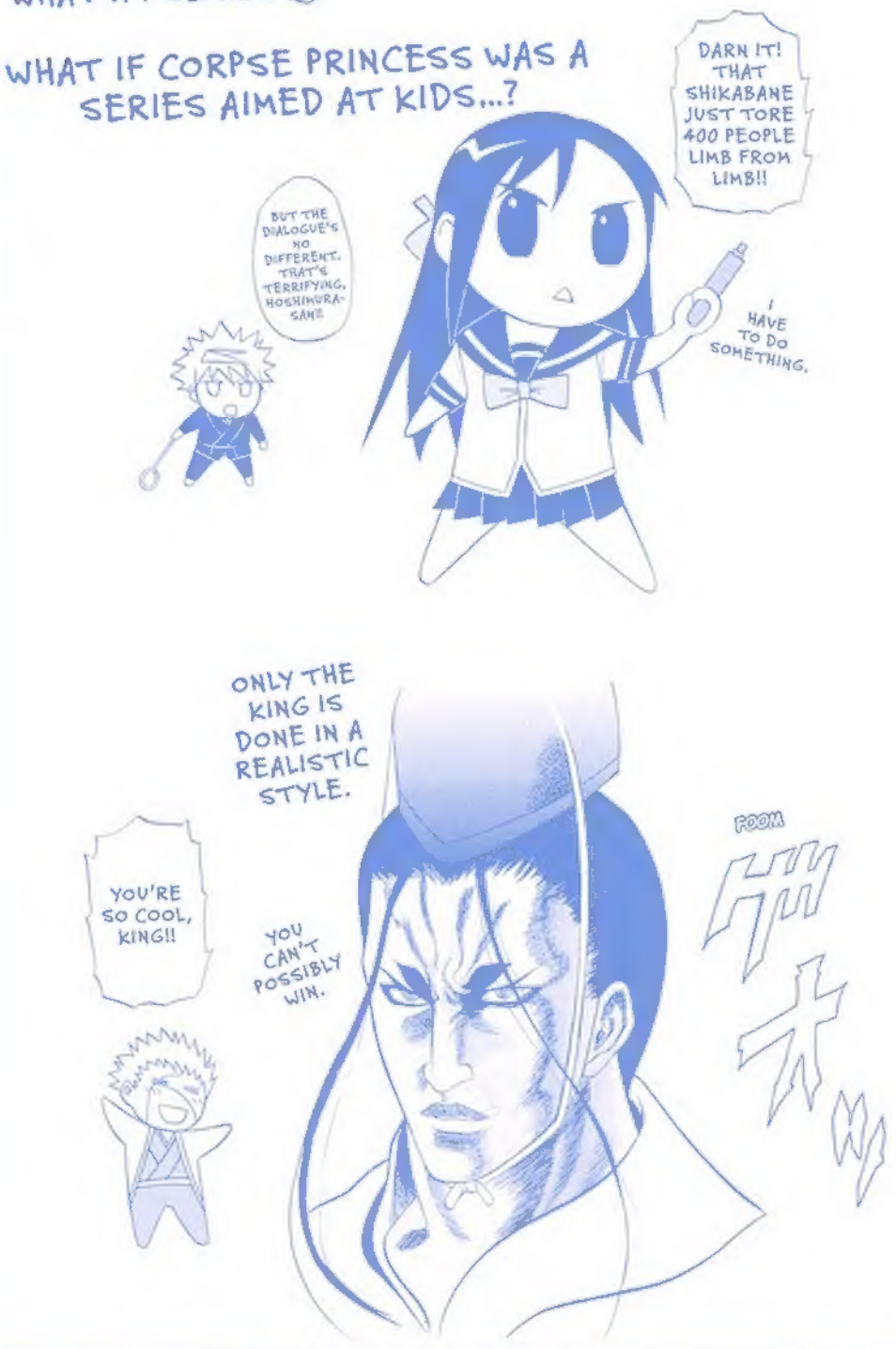
"I'LL TAKE IT, MR. CONTRACT HOLDER," SAYS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO HER PARTNER IN THE STRUGGLE, OURI KAGAMI. THEY'RE BOTH DETERMINED NOW, AND IT'S NO TOKEN GESTURE OUT OF MERE PITY. BUT THE SHIKABANE HAVE THE LAST LAUGH AS INESCAPABLE REGRETS HASTEN THE COMING OF THEIR LAND OF THE DEAD EXPERIMENT. LEADING THEM IS THE CORNERSTONE SHIKABANE SWARM AND THE TARGET OF MAKINA'S REVENGE—THE SEVEN STARS.

SHIKABANE KILLS NEEDED FOR CORPSE PRINCESS MAKINA HOSHIMURA TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN: 95

7

volume COMING SOON

CORPSE PRINCESS


WHAT IF? SERIES⑤
WHAT IF CORPSE PRINCESS WAS A SERIES AIMED AT KIDS...?
DARN IT! THAT SHIKABANE JUST TORE 400 PEOPLE LIMB FROM LIMB!!
BUT THE DIALOGUE'S NO DIFFERENT. THAT'S TERRIFYING, HOSHINURA-SAN!!
I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.
ONLY THE KING IS DONE IN A REALISTIC STYLE.
YOU'RE SO COOL, KING!!
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY WIN.
POOM

AKAHITO YOSHIICHI

DEVLORT AEGIS

HEIGHT: 165 CM
WEIGHT: 51 KG
BLOOD TYPE: UNKNOWN
BIRTHDAY: APRIL 4TH
AGE: ABOUT 30

FAVORITE THINGS: HAMBURGERS, RICE OMELETTES, MATTERS OF PRIDE, JAPANESE FILMS (ESPECIALLY PERIOD PIECES)
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS: SHAMEFUL ACTS
SPECIAL ABILITIES: SEED-SPITTING, DARTS (HE CAN ONLY BEAT RIO AT THOSE TWO THINGS)

GREGORIO VLAUPNIR

HEIGHT: 191 CM
WEIGHT: 72 KG
BLOOD TYPE: UNKNOWN
BIRTHDAY: DECEMBER 25TH
AGE: OVER 300

FAVORITE THINGS: ROAST BEEF, WINE, PRINCIPLES OF CHIVALRY
LEAST FAVORITE THINGS: SHAMEFUL ACTS
SPECIAL ABILITIES: GAMBLING (HAS A PERFECT POKER FACE)

YOU SHOULDN'T EAT JUST BEFORE BED.

IT'S FINE. I'M A KING TOO, AFTER ALL.

GRUNCH

POTATO CHIPS

TRANSLATION NOTES

OVERALL

Japanese Buddhism has a complex ranking system for its monks called *soukan* (*sou* meaning "monk," and *kan* implying hierarchy). Monks in this story often address each other by rank.

PAGE 92

The symbol over Takamasa's head indicates that he's a newbie. That symbol—which is typically green and yellow—is known as the "shoshinsha" mark and is placed on the cars of new drivers in Japan for the first year so that everyone else on the road knows to watch out.

PAGE 98

Most clubs and sports teams (including Inuhiko's student council) in Japanese middle and high schools continue to meet on a daily or near daily basis during summer "vacation."

PAGE 127

The particular school day that Ushijima is complaining about is called a "toukoubi," and it occurs once or twice during summer vacation for most Japanese schools. Attendance is mandatory, and the time serves as a chance to catch up on administrative matters and check progress on homework before the next school term begins.

CORPSE PRINCESS 6

Yoshiichi Akahito

Translation: Caleb D. Cook
Lettering: Bianca Pistillo

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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